

CEPPS
Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening



CEPPS Quarterly Report: January 1, 2012 to March 31, 2012

NEPAL: Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes
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This cover memorandum accompanies the detailed reports submitted by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) of the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the “Nepal: Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes” program:

I. POLITICAL CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Nepal is undergoing a critical and historic period of political transition. The completion of the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections in April 2008 marked the beginning of the country’s course in drafting a new constitution and solidifying peace after a decade-long civil war. Major political stakeholders anticipate that the drafting process will lay out a new federal government structure more representative than the current centralized system.

However, the country’s political environment has become increasingly unstable and the constitution drafting process has been slow. The poor performance of political parties and the lack of consensus within parliament have fed the loss of public confidence in multi-party politics. Nepalis have characterized parties as being disconnected from citizen concerns outside of Kathmandu, unable to deliver on electoral campaign promises, and beset with corruption and opaque internal processes. In the CA, which acts as an interim parliament, negotiations of political arrangements have been difficult both in the aftermath of a socially and politically destabilizing civil war. In addition, nearly a third of all members are new to elected office and lack the knowledge, skills and resources to fulfill their mandates. Civic engagement within the political process is uneven, and the culture of monitoring and holding political leaders accountable is underdeveloped.

With the adoption of a new constitution by the CA, elections will be held in the near future to choose representatives to a successor legislature and new sub-national governance structures. The legitimacy of such institutions will be critical in managing tensions associated with diverse ethnicities, castes, and political groupings in Nepali society. This underscores the importance of an electoral process that is publicly viewed as credible and that involves the meaningful participation of voters and citizens. Effective public participation in these processes will be critical in determining the legitimacy of the new constitution, the government that is formed in its wake, and the future of country's political stability.

The CEPPS partners have identified the following challenges, organized by program component that will be addressed through this program:

Promote and Strengthen Broader Political Processes

- Organizational weaknesses and the poor governance record of Nepali political parties have led to a loss of public confidence in a multiparty system of democracy.
- Political parties lack internal democratic practices that encourage local party branches and members, including women youth and marginalized groups, to participate in the development of positions on policy issues.
- Political parties lack organized and transparent resource mobilization, and have difficulties in membership recruitment and retention.
- Political parties lack the institutional ability to formulate policy solutions and engage constituents and non-governmental stakeholders in public policy discussions.
- Organizational weaknesses have contributed to the parties' poor electoral preparation and performance. The lack of understanding of citizen concerns and priorities have resulted in party platforms and campaign strategies that were neither relevant nor compelling.
- In preparing for previous elections, candidate selection processes were not transparent, and candidates were not fully aware of their respective parties' policy positions.
- Political parties lack the capacity to plan and organize effective electoral campaigns, and are short on technical and practical resources to conduct campaigns in a competitive political environment.
- There is an underdeveloped culture within civil society and the media of monitoring the activities of political parties.

Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants

- While the CA election of 2008 was praised a credible electoral process and well managed by the ECN, as expected in the first post-conflict election in a country with as many challenges as Nepal, there were shortcomings and irregularities in the electoral process (voter registration process, limitations of the voter education program, lack of a clear election disputes resolution mechanism).
- In an ongoing spirit of collaboration and transparency, in the post-election period, the ECN undertook a series of post-election evaluations with stakeholders at a national and local level. During the coming years, it will be crucial to maintain the ECN's credibility and build on its institutional capacity to remain a strong pillar in Nepal's ongoing march from war to peace and from a monarchy to a Federal Democratic Republic.
- Although the 2008 general elections were mostly free of violence and administered without widespread problems, shortcomings in Nepal's election process persist,

including: problems with the voter list and registration process; interference from some election and government officials; abuse of state resources for campaign purposes; and an inadequate process to resolve election complaints.

- Given the performance of civil society during previous elections, domestic monitoring groups and the media could play a stronger role in observing the elections and fostering greater transparency and fairness in the electoral process.

Improve the democratic functioning of the Constituent Assembly (CA)/Parliament

- Previous parliaments and the current Constituent Assembly have not been effective in their outreach and representation functions.
- There is a shortage of CA members that with the technical expertise to draft and review proposed legislation.
- With the promulgation of the new constitution and the anticipated shift to a federal system of government, it is likely that many newly elected members will have little or no experience in serving as elected representatives.
- Key bodies within parliament institutions are understaffed and under-resourced. The Parliament Secretariat lacks adequate technical knowledge and material resources to effectively support the legislative process.
- The CA/Parliament conducts few committee hearings and does not have a formalized public consultation process. Little interaction exists between members of the CA/Parliament and their constituents, and this lack of interface breeds gaps in government responsiveness to citizen needs, citizen inclusion in public policy development and the accountability of officials and their use of public resources.
- There is little public information on the latest developments in the constitutional development process and the work of the legislature.

II. OBJECTIVES

The program aims to strengthen political parties, electoral and legislative processes in Nepal. To this end, IFES and NDI would be working to achieve the following specific objectives:

IFES

- Ensure that Nepal develops a body of legislation on the electoral process that is comprehensive, coherent and consistent; which conforms to international standards and suits the socio-economic context and new political realities of Nepal.
- Improve the capacity of the ECN to manage future elections and consolidate its mandate and performance through the provision of high level technical assistance in the legal, management and technical aspects of elections and long-term professional development capacity building
- Expand and improve the delivery of voter education by working with the ECN and selected non-governmental organizations to plan, develop, and implement effective voter education programs, with a focus on capacity building, in order to enhance the electorate's understanding of democratic practices and rights, and increase participation in the electoral process.
- Closely monitor, analyze and report on the overall electoral process with a focus on the Election Commission's internal activities and external interaction with other electoral stakeholders.

- Provide a facility that can address unforeseen windows of opportunity that may arise in Nepal's unpredictable post-conflict political and electoral environment, in order to achieve immediate beneficial results in line with the program objectives.

NDI

- Promote and strengthen democratic political processes through political party development assistance.
Sub-Objective 1.A: Improve democratic political party organizational structures and operations
Sub-Objective 1.B: Enhance the electoral competitiveness of political parties
- Strengthen the capacity of citizen oversight of the electoral process.
Sub-Objective 2.A: Enhance the capacity of civil society to monitor elections
Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthen the capacity of media to report on the electoral process
- Support the institutional strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/ Parliament and improve its capacity to address constituent needs.
Sub-Objective 3.A: Strengthen the legislative drafting capacity of the legislature
Sub-Objective 3.B: Increase communication between representatives and their constituents

III. ACTIVITIES

A. Promote and Strengthen Democratic Political Processes through Political Party Development Assistance

Effective Political Party Organizing and Outreach

From January 22 to 28, NDI organized two regional, multiparty training-of-trainers (ToT) workshops for its nine political party partners in the far-west and eastern regions of the country. More than 100 party activists attended sessions on building the internal capacity of their party's training units.

On January 18 and 19, NDI conducted a national, multiparty workshop in Kathmandu on voter registration for political parties. Thirty participants took part in this event, which provided skills and techniques on voter targeting and outreach, door-to-door canvassing and procedures for registration. Following the workshop, eight political parties organized replicate trainings for their district level party activists in seven districts in late February and in March.

The Institute met with its party partners to discuss the formation of the Future Leadership Academy (FLA). Under the FLA, NDI will support parties to develop knowledgeable and skilled young leaders equipped to provide substantive contributions to their party's democratic future. The Institute is preparing to launch the program in the next quarter.

Building the Investigative Skills of Journalists to Monitor and Report on Party Activities

Internews and Freedom Forum added content on elections, constitution-writing and political developments in Nepali and English to their recently launched website,

www.nepalelectionchannel.org. Freedom Forum also issued monthly media monitoring reports on electoral and press violation issues and posted them on the website.

Internews partnered with the Antenna Foundation Nepal (AFN) to broadcast a new radio program, “Loktantra Mantra” (Democracy, the Mantra), that is based on reporting filed by journalists trained under AFN’s investigative journalism training. By the end of March 2012, AFN produced seven episodes comprised of local radio reports, interviews and testimonies from around the country.

Internews and the Foundation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) collected membership forms from more than 2,500 of its members and digitized the data to create a comprehensive and accessible database of journalists. FNJ also developed an online social media survey and plans to implement it in the next quarter.

B. Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants

Technical Assistance to the ECN in the Legal, Management and Technical Aspects of Elections

IFES continued to provide technical and capacity building support on legal reform during this quarter to the Election Commission, Nepal (ECN) and other stakeholders, focusing on the amalgamation and synchronization of those segments of the electoral law so far drafted, the review of the draft political party and electoral laws, the drafting of regulations for voter registration, and the analysis of current legal frameworks for local government elections.

IFES has continued to use its reviews with ECN staff of the draft legal frameworks for political parties and elections to enhance the ECN secretariat, specifically the legal department’s knowledge of international good practices in electoral law. During this quarter, IFES put substantial emphasis on electoral systems and discussed ECN structure under federalism.

Strengthen ECN’s Electoral Management Capacity

During this quarter, IFES continued to play a pivotal role in the implementation of the voter registration program, providing significant technical and capacity building support on a daily basis. In addition to IFES’ strategic input, IFES’ support has been crucial for the operational effectiveness of: the voter registration data verification and amalgamation process; voter registration in the remaining ten districts where registration was earlier obstructed; and planning and preparing for the forthcoming voter roll display, claims and objections and re-opening of voter registration program. IFES also supported ECN’s preparation for future elections by working with state printer JEMC to review the status of ballot paper printing capacities, assess future needs, and report on these to ECN and key donors.

IFES technical assistance focus during this reporting period has been on supporting the ECN in preparation for the claims and objections (additions and removal of persons from the register) and re-opening of local voter registration centers, scheduled to commence in mid-April 2012. From early December until end March, voter registration increased by approximately a half million voters, from 9.8 million to 10.3 million. IFES continued to advise ECN members and

staff that there were significant numbers of potential registrants – as many as 3.5 to 4.0 million - who had yet to register, and that it was essential that ECN reopen registration places to deal with this, and press for special measures for citizenship certificate issue and out of district registrants.

Capacity Building

IFES continued to use day-to-day discussions with ECN staff and meetings with political party and civil society stakeholders to provide information on international good practice in electoral legal frameworks, and to increase stakeholders' knowledge of simplified electoral systems and quotas.

IFES has continued to use its reviews with ECN staff of the draft legal frameworks for political parties and elections to enhance the ECN secretariat, specifically the legal department's knowledge of international good practices in electoral law. During this quarter, IFES put substantial emphasis on electoral systems and discussed ECN structure under federalism. In February and March 2012, a series of meetings were held with key ECN personnel to develop understanding of the changes in the legal framework that will be required to support the future operation of the ECN's voter registration system. In meetings with individual party leaders, and during the workshops with civil society groups and media in January-February, 2012 IFES sought to increase understanding of electoral systems and development of policies on representation issues.

NDI continued to support the Next Generation Parliamentarians Group (NGPG), created to enhance the role of young and first-term parliamentarians. On February 6, NDI met with NGPG leadership to discuss NGPG's management, strategy and future activities. The Institute advised NGPG to become more results-oriented by introducing effective management practices and involving all members in the decision-making process. NGPG members discussed holding meetings with their Indian counterparts on matters of bilateral importance such as hydropower and water management. NGPG members also decided to organize the next seminar on the issue of deforestation. On March 13, NDI met with NGPG to discuss the agenda and the names of participants for the deforestation seminar.

Expand and Improve Delivery of Voter Education

The IFES team has continued to maintain an excellent working relationship with the ECN voter education team and provided ongoing and daily capacity building support. A key focus of IFES' capacity building work on voter education this reporting period has been ensuring the involvement of ECN in the design and implementation of new and revised outreach products, such as the redevelopment of the ECN website, the design of the ECN booklet a new radio and TV PSAs for the voter registration program. IFES has also commenced preparatory work for a public opinion survey whose results will assist ECN in targeting its outreach efforts.

For the ECN website, ECN identified that a major weakness of the current website is that ECN was not sufficiently involved in the design to make the site easily sustainable. IFES has ensured that ECN is involved in all stages of the project – planning, selection of contractor, site redesign and content management. IFES has also supported ECN to improve the focus and brevity of its public messaging. Working with ECN staff, IFES supported the design of a booklet explaining

the ECN's organization, history and activities. ECN itself initiated contact with a popular Nepali comedy group to develop its new TV PSA for voter registration.

C. Support the Institutional Strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament and Improve its Capacity to Address Constituent Needs

Strengthening the Capacity of the Parliamentary Secretariat

NDI subgrantee The Asia Foundation (TAF) met with the secretary general and spokesperson of the Parliament Secretariat to discuss an assessment report on the Parliament library, which included recommendations and a plan of action for improvements over the next several years. With TAF's assistance, the Parliament Secretariat held an inauguration event of the media center.

TAF and its partner Interface Nepal broadcast the 30-minute radio program, "*Hamro Kanoon*," on over 25 different FM radio stations across the country. Each episode introduced and discussed various aspects of the Nepali legislative process. During the weekly program, TAF and Interface Nepal also sought opinions from relevant experts.

Promoting Dialogue between Elected Members and Their Constituencies

The Institute, in coordination with its partner Pro Public, organized meetings with national stakeholders to enable parliamentarians to lobby relevant ministries on district-specific issues such as the allocation of budgets for the implementation of district-level activities. The National Planning Commission (NPC) welcomed the idea of dialogue between elected representatives and government officials and hosted several meetings on such issues as tourism, technical education, flooding and agriculture.

The Institute and Pro Public conducted a second round of community dialogues in ten districts. Thirty-one parliamentarians from eight political parties discussed progress made since the first round of community dialogues in early 2011; they also responded to new queries put forward by constituents. These dialogues provided an effective forum for parliamentarians and constituents to interact with each other. The dialogues helped enhance the representative function of parliamentarians by providing a much needed platform to showcase their efforts in working for the betterment of their respective constituencies.

Supporting Greater Public Awareness and Engagement in the Work of Parliament

TAF continued to partner with the Nepal Constitution Foundation (NCF) to convene a broad coalition of five specific interest groups, which include Dalit, Madheshi, women, youth and *Janajati*, to conduct legislative audits. The bills audited this quarter include: Public Procurement Act Amendment Bill; Bagmati Civilization Development Council Act; Contempt of Court Act; Nepalganj University Bill; Amending the Voters List Act; Jail/Bail provisions of Proposed Criminal Procedure Code; Bill to Amend Scholarship Act; and Social Security Fund Bill. TAF also continued working with its three partners – Samudayak Sarathi (SS), Rural Community Development Service Council (RCDSC), and WomenAct (WA) – to conduct the fifth wave of townhall meetings.

IV. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE INDICATORS

Foreign Assistance Indicators	IFES	NDI	Quarter Total	FY12 Total
Number of individuals who received USG-assisted political party training.	N/A	408	408	
Number of domestic election observers trained with USG assistance.	N/A	0	0	
Number of laws or amendments to ensure credible elections drafted with USG technical assistance	0	N/A	0	
Number of USG-assisted public sessions held regarding proposed changes to the country's legal framework	0 ¹	N/A	0	
Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote electoral reform and/or improvements in the electoral system.	0 ²	N/A	0	
Number of electoral administration procedures and systems strengthened with USG assistance.	1 ³	N/A	1	
Number of electoral officials trained with USG assistance	203 ⁴	N/A	203	
Number of national legislators and national legislative staff attending USG sponsored training or educational events.	N/A	5	5	
Number of public forums resulting from USG assistance in which national legislators and members of the public interact.	N/A	11	11	

V. EVALUATION

Success Stories

ECN this quarter has shown signs of modernity in its approach to some public information activities. The EEIC project has stimulated some thought within ECN on more interesting approaches to public outreach. The radio and TV PSAs produced with IFES support have a sharp, direct feel; the design approved by ECN for its redeveloped website has a clean, interactive focus; the designs for the new voter education calendar and ECN promotional booklet are modern, and uncluttered.

The strength of the local voter education program implemented by IFES sub awardees has been recognized in the enthusiastic manner in which DEOs in the respective districts have embraced the extension of these CSOs' activities to cover the ECN's voter list display, claims and objections and reopening of local registration centers. All CSOs have continued to over deliver on their targets, and continue to have high information transfer rates. The emerging cooperation with CSOs funded by EU for voter education is a good sign. It is pleasing to see the

¹ No activity this quarter.

² No activity this quarter.

³ Technical support to ECN for developing procedures for voter registration, claims, and objections.

⁴ Participants of BRIDGE courses on: Orientation to ECN HQ support staff, training on electoral management for DEO staff, and training for new DEOs.

improvement in project management capacities amongst the sub awardees, especially in DNF, though management changes at Youth Initiative have meant IFES is having to provide more support than previously to them. Such grass roots personal motivation/education campaigns are expensive per capita, though highly effective in reaching less mainstream populations.

TAF has been successful in creating an environment that ensures a cross-cutting relationship between program partners as evidenced by the sharing of program information, research findings and resource persons. For example, the relationship initiated with the Parliament Secretariat spokesperson through TAF's work in establishing the media center has now turned into a regular spot ("*From the Spokesperson's Desk*") in the weekly radio show *Hamro Kanoon*. Depending on the amount of information available to the spokesperson, this spot varies from 30 seconds to three minutes in length.

Lessons Learned

ECN has still not taken steps to institutionalize and make sustainable the BRIDGE program. The additional facilitators trained by IFES in 2011 have not been used by ECN this quarter: ECN has preferred to use senior ECN staff to travel as facilitators. With the large number of BRIDGE workshops this quarter, this has meant that two if not three ECN Joint Secretaries have been out of Kathmandu for most of each week in the February/March period which affected policy development and operation of the ECN's programs – especially for the re-opening local voter registration.

In preparation for the new phase of voter registration, commencing mid-April, it was a good effort by ECN to have all data amalgamation and printing of local level voters lists completed in time for distributing the lists for this process. Voters list print quality in many cases would need to be improved for an election. The number of apparent duplicates so far found on the register – around 25,000 – and concerns about the changes to data made at local level during the data verification process at end-2011 make it highly desirable that voters review their register entries.

This is also an opportunity for those not on the register – which may be as high as 4 million people, to register, and for corrections to be made to existing data. For a number of reasons these opportunities may not be taken, or may not be used properly.

Although AFN and its project partners were in agreement over the format of "Loktantra Mantra," it has taken more time than anticipated to produce the radio program. The content required depends on reporters who were trained six months before the production began. AFN has been working with reporters and mentoring them until quality reports are produced or an interview is conducted. AFN expects the radio program will gain momentum in the next quarter.

TAF had originally planned to review bills during the townhall discussions and social audits that have been tabled in the parliament, when bills are returned to the legislative committee for final discussion before the voting begins. During the first year of program, the selection of bills relevant to the public was limited. However, as the government and the legislative parliament have moved slowly in the past year, there are fewer bills that are appropriate for these two activities. In the future, given the political uncertainty, it may prove difficult to move forward on this program activity. To remedy this, TAF and its implementing partners have decided to

broaden the program from bills that have been tabled in parliament to bills developed by the government that have “matured” and are close to the level of being submitted to parliament. TAF plans to work closely with its legal consultants to ensure the maturity of the bills.

Challenges

The CSO sub grantees will have some difficulties to overcome in the next two months. The ECN voter registration at VDC/municipal ward level program, scheduled centrally to last from April 15 to end May, has been compressed by many DEOs to 25 days or less. This will make it very difficult for the CSOs to mobilize effectively sufficient resources to cover the planned locations with the planned level of support. ECN’s late omission of out of district registration from the local registration program may also mean it is difficult for Youth Initiative to get registration results from its planned education efforts in schools and colleges in the Kathmandu Valley.

This has been a very hectic quarter for IFES’ BRIDGE support, and training support in general. With the ECN’s BRIDGE coordinator away on sick leave for much of the quarter, the load for organizing, developing and facilitating at BRIDGE and election management training sessions fell on IFES National Training Advisor and it was only through her efforts that the program held together.

At the beginning of last quarter, TAF and its legal consultants and implementing partners selected the amendment to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) bill for the townhall discussions. Preparation was in full swing, including research of the legislative process and the training of moderators for discussion. However, a few days before the start of the discussions, the NHRC bill was passed by the parliament. The unpredictability of the legislative process is a challenge. For example, the Electricity Act that was discussed in prior townhall meetings had been in the parliament for over two years with over 140 amendments. For an activity that takes significant amount of time to undertake, coupled with the time-sensitive nature of the legislative process, understanding the timing of the bills is crucial in making the intended impact. TAF continues to consult with its partners to ensure intervention within the window of opportunity available.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Promote and strengthen democratic political processes through political party development assistance

- NDI will conduct its Future Leadership Academy, consisting of two national five-day trainings.
- IPWA will expand its district committee in one additional district and conduct capacity building training for the newly elected women members.
- NDI will organize two multiparty workshops with political parties.

- The Institute and international expert Dr. Sherrie Wolff will facilitate a two-day multiparty workshop with major political parties in Kathmandu. In addition, Dr. Wolff will hold consultations with targeted parliamentary committees to organize committee specific workshops, seminars, and training sessions.
- AFN will produce the remaining 19 episodes of the radio program and broadcast them on 80 radio stations. As a part of monitoring and evaluation, AFN will monitor the broadcast and impact of the program in the communities it reaches.
- Internews will continue working with investigative journalism trainer Mohan Mainali and a local developer to develop an online Investigative Journalism toolkit.
- FNJ will survey 2,000 journalists on their use of social media and will report on the findings.
- Freedom Forum will continue to manage the NepalElectionChannel.org site including monthly monitoring reports.

Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants

- Support ECN to finalise review of amalgamated and synchronized draft segments of the electoral law and draft political party law
- Continue to work with stakeholders to gain acceptance and broad consensus on a simplified electoral system for Nepal
- Supporting the drafting of a voter registration segment of draft electoral law
- Support ECN's development of strategies, processes and directives for post public review/display, claims and objections phase of voter registration including preparation of a final voter roll.
- Support ECN training needs for voter roll display, claims and objections and re-opening of local registration centers.
- Support the ECN BRIDGE team to develop and implement three, three-day BRIDGE training workshops on gender and elections for selected stakeholder groups, two, three-day on election management for media. Work with the ECN BRIDGE team to develop content for an Elections and Technology BRIDGE workshop for ECN HQ staff.
- Continue to provide technical, capacity building and material support to the ECN's voter education campaign for the ECN's voter registration program, including the broadcast of voter registration radio PSAs.
- Continue to work with the ECN to develop and implement a voter education strategy and materials to support continuous voter registration. Support ECN initiatives for the development of additional voter education materials or events it identifies as essential during the implementation of the claims, objections and re-opening of local voter registration phase of its program.
- NDI will conduct at least one seminar and a capacity building event for NGPG members.

Support the Institutional Strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament and Improve its Capacity to Address Constituent Needs

- NDI will continue community dialogue follow-up activities and meetings in nine districts (Dhankuta, Siraha, Bara, Nuwakot, Syangja, Kapilvastu, Doti, Surkhet and Dailekh) and will expand the dialogue program to an additional four districts.
- NDI will organize at least one activity to facilitate dialogue on critical topics between parliamentarians and constituents in Lalitpur, Dhanusha and Arghakhanchi.
- NDI, in coordination with the Parliamentary Secretariat, will select, recruit and deploy interns as part of the parliamentary internship program.
- Following the initial meeting with the secretary general and spokesperson of the Parliament Secretariat, TAF will work with Writing Workshop and the Parliament Secretariat to develop a workplan. TAF plans to complete the indexing of current volumes of materials that the library holds.
- TAF will continue to work with Writing Workshop to complete the Parliament Secretariat's media policy as well as provide initial trainings to Parliament Secretariat staff.
- TAF will continue to work with SS, WA and RCDSC in conducting the next round of townhall meetings in the coming quarter.
- TAF will continue to work closely with NCF and the interest groups in identifying and auditing relevant legislation in the coming quarter. Furthermore, TAF will coordinate with New Spotlight to ensure the dissemination of interest groups' audit findings and recommendations through the print media.
- TAF will continue to work closely with Interface Nepal to identify relevant legislation and will provide assistance in producing and broadcasting the weekly radio show.
- TAF will continue to work closely with all its component partners to ensure close coordination between the various activities.

International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

Quarterly Report

I. SUMMARY

Even though there were significant advances in the constitution writing and peace processes during this reporting period, progress has been spasmodic due to differences in opinion among major political parties on two significant issues - state restructuring and The Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN)-Maoist combatants' integration into Nepal Army. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court declined to review its November 2011 decision on the final extension of the Constituent Assembly (CA) term, forcing parties to meet the May 27, 2012 constitution drafting deadline. Nepali Congress (NC) and Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) united against the Maoist party on issues pertinent to concluding the peace process, holding the Maoist party accountable to the 7-point agreement signed between them in November 2011. There was intermittent talking up of local government elections during the early part of the quarter; however, interest in this waned towards the end of the quarter. ECN's main activities remain focused on voter registration. The end-quarter registration data collected to date had been amalgamated on schedule and voters' lists for display at village development committee (VDC) and municipal ward level were being printed. Preparations for the mid-April commencement of display of voters' lists, corrections, claims and objections and reopening of voter registration in 734 municipal wards and 3,726 VDCs were well under way by the end of the quarter.

IFES continued to provide technical and capacity building support on legal reform during this quarter to the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) and other stakeholders, focusing on the amalgamation and synchronization of those segments of the electoral law so far drafted, the review of the draft political party and electoral laws, the drafting of regulations for voter registration, and the analysis of current legal frameworks for local government elections.

For the implementation of the voter registration program, IFES provided significant technical and capacity building support on a daily basis, mainly on the operational effectiveness of the voter registration data amalgamation process, voter registration in the ten districts where registration was earlier obstructed, and planning and preparing for the forthcoming voter roll display, claims and objections and re-opening of voter registration program.

IFES took the lead coordination role, working with the ECN and its Building Resources in Democracy, Governance, and Elections (BRIDGE) partners, UNDP and International IDEA, to plan for and implement BRIDGE activities. IFES funded and actively supported the implementation of a series of six-day regional Election Management BRIDGE workshops this quarter and provided logistics coordination and facilitation support for: a three-day Introduction to Election Management BRIDGE workshop for new district election officers (DEOs) and a three-day BRIDGE workshop for senior trainers at the Technical Institute for Training Instruction. IFES supported the development of training materials for an International IDEA-funded BRIDGE course for civil society organizations (CSOs) on election observation and dispute resolution.

IFES is playing a significant role in shaping ECN's training plans for both the voter registration process and ECN administration, developing the capacities of the ECN training team, and

guiding the development of products such as the training materials for the voter roll display, claims and objections process. Ensuring sustainability of progress in the ECN is an important objective of IFES' support, and is being demonstrated in development of ECN capacities in IFES support for the redevelopment of the ECN website, development of ECN outreach materials such as the design of a promotional booklet on the ECN and a new voter education calendar, the development of an ECN research library and archive, and the development of new radio and TV PSAs for the voter registration program. IFES has also commenced preparatory work for a public opinion survey whose results will assist ECN in targeting its outreach efforts. As part of its continued support for the ECN's voter education activities, IFES supported the printing of 100,000 copies of the ECN's voter registration Q&A brochure and 500,000 copies of an information leaflet to be disseminated during the roll display, claims and objections and reopening of registration program.

IFES CSO sub-grantees continued to conduct their scheduled voter education activities through March, mobilizing their field partners and networks to educate their target groups - youth, women, Dalits, and Kamaiyas – on voter registration. CSOs exceeded their targets for number of people reached through their activities. The CSOs communicated with DEOs regularly to provide updates on their activities and invite the DEOs to their programs and to receive their expert advice, guidance, feedback and cooperation during implementation of all events.

II. BACKGROUND

Political Updates

During this reporting period, even though there were significant advances in the constitution writing and peace processes, progress has been spasmodic due to differences in opinion among major political parties' opinions on two significant issues - state restructuring and Maoist combatants' integration into Nepal Army (NA). Meanwhile, the Supreme Court (SC) declined to review its November 2011 decision on the final extension of the Constituent Assembly (CA) term, forcing parties to meet the May 27, 2012 constitution drafting deadline, despite review petitions filed separately by the Prime Minister and Speaker of the CA.

On the constitution writing front, the political parties remain divided over major issues such as state restructuring, the system of governance, and the details of the electoral system, among others. A lack of unanimity in the State Restructuring Committee's report (a majority proposing 11 provinces with the minority proposing 6 provinces) has provoked intense debate. Opinions are divided on issues surrounding the proposed right to self-determination, political priority rights to dominant ethnic groups and the need for ensuring territorial integrity in the new federal structure. The peace process witnessed some momentum on Maoist combatant integration and rehabilitation process. Voluntary retirement was offered to 7,365 combatants who opted for it, 13 of the 28 ex- PLA (People's Liberation Army) camps were closed, and negotiations progressed on integrating remaining combatants into the NA, under a special directorate. However, the Maoist proposals for integrating ex combatants into the NA – on selection, training and final placement – have not been acceptable to NC and CPN-UML.

NC and UML acted together against the Maoist party on peace process issues, attempting to hold the wavering and internally split Maoist party accountable to the 7-point agreement signed

between them in November 2011. During this period, intra party feuds intensified in both the NC and the Maoist party. For the Maoists, an alignment of the factions led by Chairman Dahal and Prime Minister Bahattarai has supported the government line on the peace process, while the hardline Baidhya faction is threatening to take to streets and take up armed struggle if their demand for the PM's resignation is not met. The intra party feud within the NC continues between the Koirala and Deuba factions over formation of new student union groups with new leaders. UML, meanwhile, has been conducting nation-wide outreach campaigns to revive their party organizations. The Madhes based parties have been involved in controversy: one ex-minister was jailed for conviction in a kidnapping case, another incumbent minister for a corruption case, and another minister was asked to resign by the PM for not following PM's directives. The SC issued a stay order on a controversial directive promulgated by Madhesi Home Minister, to grant citizenship by descent to children born before one of their parents acquired Nepali citizenship.

There was intermittent promotion of local government elections during the quarter following the implementation by the government of a Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) ruling to disband the local all-party mechanisms serving as local authorities; however interest in this waned towards the end of the quarter. ECN has made some limited logistical plans for a potential local government election. ECN's main activities remain focused on voter registration. As at end-quarter data collected to date had been amalgamated on schedule and votes lists for display at VDC and municipal ward level were being printed. Preparations for the mid April commencements of display of voters lists, corrections, claims and objection and reopening of voter registration in 734 municipal wards and 3,726 VDCs were well under way at end quarter.

ECN deregistered 10 minor political parties (none with CA representation) out of 81 total registered parties, for failing to provide annual financial reports for three consecutive years. Two other parties were fined Rs. 100 (maximum allowable under the law) for deficiencies in their financial reporting.

The Constitutional Council reportedly endorsed a concept paper on the appointment of officials to constitutional bodies (including ECN), which required that only persons who had been a special class or first class civil service officer (i.e. at Secretary or Joint Secretary level) for a minimum of 12 years, were eligible for appointment. To require that members of an independent electoral management body all be recent or former senior civil servants is a highly unusual criterion and does not augur well for the continued independence of the ECN.

Program Objectives

Under the Consortium of Elections and Political Strengthening (CEPPS III), IFES activities will support one of the three principal objectives as detailed by USAID: 2) Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants and the following sub-objectives:

- A) Strengthen democratic legal framework
- B) Strengthen the ECN's electoral management capacity and
- C) Expand and improve delivery of voter education

In support of the above, IFES will achieve the following objectives:

- To ensure that Nepal develops a body of legislation on the electoral process that is comprehensive, coherent and consistent; which conforms to international standards and suits the socio-economic context and new political realities of Nepal.
- To improve the capacity of the ECN to manage future elections and consolidate its mandate and performance through the provision of high level technical assistance in the legal, management and technical aspects of elections and long-term professional development capacity building.
- To expand and improve the delivery of voter education by working with the ECN and selected non-governmental organizations to plan, develop, and implement effective voter education programs, with a focus on capacity building, in order to enhance the electorate's understanding of democratic practices and rights, and increase participation in the electoral process.
 - To closely monitor, analyze and report on the overall electoral process with a focus on the Election Commission's internal activities and external interaction with other electoral stakeholders.
 - To provide a facility that can address unforeseen windows of opportunity that may arise in Nepal's unpredictable post-conflict political and electoral environment, in order to achieve immediate beneficial results in line with the program objectives.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

Summary: IFES has continued to provide technical and capacity building support on legal reform to the ECN and other stakeholders focusing on the amalgamation and synchronization of drafted segments of the electoral law, the review of the draft political party and electoral laws, the drafting of regulations for voter registration, and the analysis of current legal frameworks for local government elections.

Activity 1.1 – Technical Assistance

IFES continued to ensure that its two programs for electoral law reform, one funded under CEPPS III and the other funded by the Norwegian government, are integrated to maximize coordinated technical inputs and public discussion and review opportunities. The IFES Country Director and IFES' sub-contractor under the Norwegian-funded program, Quality AS have worked in tandem during the quarter to provide advice to ECN and its stakeholders on the drafts of the political party law and electoral law, and electoral legal reform issues in general.

IFES continued to support ECN's review of the draft electoral law during this quarter, commencing with a workshop at ECN on January 5, and the continuing review of the political party law drafts. With no agreement as yet on the details of the constitutional underpinnings of the structure of the state, the electoral system and system of governance, work on the constitutionally dependent segments (e.g. on electoral system, party/individual candidacy and result determination) has slowed this quarter. However under IFES Norwegian funded program, regular workshops, groups meetings and meetings with individual political party leaders were held on electoral systems issues, focused on simplifying representational quota requirements for

minority and disadvantaged groups such as Dalits and Indigenous Peoples. The revised draft political party law is still under review by ECN.

During this quarter, IFES Country Director provided ECN and stakeholders with analysis of the current legal framework for local government elections, identifying a number of areas where the current framework does not meet accepted standards, is inconsistent, or in need of modernization, and suggesting appropriate reforms. A briefing on these issues was provided at the USAID Peace Partners meeting on March 28.

In mid-February, ECN prepared draft regulations for voter registration in preparation for the planned mid-April claims and objections and ‘missed’ voter registration program. IFES provided detailed comments on the deficiencies in the draft regulation to key ECN staff and key stakeholders. In conjunction with UNDP Electoral Support Project (ESP), IFES also prepared a summary of the problems with the draft regulation, and held a number of meetings with key ECN personnel on these. IFES advised that the planned new phase of voter registration would be better based on a directive, allowing more time for development of proposals for a revision to the law and drafting of a new regulation as the basis for continuous voter registration, and suggested an appropriate structure for this revised framework.

However, IFES was able to convince the ECN that a new legal and regulatory framework is required for the effective future operation of the ECN’s continuous voter registration system. Quality AS initiated the process for hiring a legal drafter for three months with the possibility of a three month IFES/USAID funded extension, primarily to draft a new chapter on voter registration for the draft electoral law and a new voter registration regulation.

Results: Ongoing technical advice to the ECN in the development of the draft political party law and draft segments of the electoral law, to promote its alignment with international standards. Further consideration by political parties and CSOs representing disadvantaged groups of IFES advice on appropriate electoral systems and simplified electoral quotas. Advice to ECN and stakeholders of reforms required to the legal framework for local government elections. Advice to ECN on revisions to regulations on voter registration and on a future legal framework appropriate for the ECN’s continuous voter registration system.

Activity 1.2 – Capacity Building

Summary: IFES continued to use day-to-day discussions with ECN staff and meetings with political party and civil society stakeholders to provide information on international good practice in electoral legal frameworks, to increase stakeholders’ knowledge of simplified electoral systems and quotas, and legal frameworks for political parties and elections to enhance the ECN secretariat’s knowledge of international good practices in electoral law.

IFES put substantial emphasis on electoral systems and discussed ECN structure under federalism. In February and March 2012, a series of meetings were held with key ECN personnel to develop understanding of the changes in the legal framework that will be required to support the future operation of the ECN’s voter registration system. In meetings with individual party leaders, and during the workshops with civil society groups and media in January-February,

2012 IFES sought to increase understanding of electoral systems and development of policies on representation issues.

Results: Further increases in knowledge of the ECN's legal department, civil society and political party stakeholders of international good practices in legal frameworks for political parties and elections, particularly in relation to electoral systems, electoral quotas and voter registration.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

Activity 2.1 – Technical Assistance

Summary: IFES' support has been crucial for the operational effectiveness of: the voter registration data verification and amalgamation process; voter registration in the remaining ten districts where registration was earlier obstructed; and planning and preparing for the forthcoming voter roll display, claims and objections and re-opening of voter registration program.

From early December until end March, voter registration increased from 9.8 million to 10.3 million voters. IFES continued to advise ECN members and staff that there were significant numbers of potential registrants – as many as 3.5 to 4.0 million - who had yet to register, and that it was essential that ECN reopen registration places to deal with this, and press for special measures for citizenship certificate issue and out of district registrants. In this quarter IFES has been advising UNDP ESP on the terms of reference and sampling techniques for an audit of the voter register to be conducted in mid-2012, which will provide further quantitative and qualitative information on gaps in voter registration.

IFES' focus during this reporting period has been on supporting the ECN in preparation for the claims and objections (additions and removal of persons from the register) and re-opening of local voter registration centers, scheduled to commence in mid-April 2012. These measures will not include local facilities for out of district registration and will not include the 10 districts in the Terai for which local registration centers were operating in November 2011 to January 2012.

The current ECN guidelines and action plan do not address critical issues: responsibilities and authorities are confusingly defined, as is the activity timetable; the required processes are not appropriate for effective transfers of registration; and the objections process for removing voters from the register is not sufficiently defined and lacks safeguards for procedural fairness.

IFES advised that ECN must provide training for the staff involved in this process, particularly for VDC and municipal ward secretaries who are not professional electoral managers, and that briefings of stakeholders should be held, at least on the district level. With IFES assistance, a comprehensive and detailed training presentation was developed for use in training District Electoral Office staff, VDC and municipal ward secretaries (who will be responsible for determining claims and objections) and computer operators, on the procedures and logistics of the voter roll display, claims and objections and reopening of registration program. They will then train lower level registration center staff using provided training material. Based on IFES advice, ECN secretariat agreed to include some of the omissions from the ECN guidelines and

action plan in this training document. As at end March this training document had yet to be approved by the ECN. IFES also assisted ECN by monitoring the production of voter lists for display, which as at end of the reporting period was progressing to schedule.

Based on the IFES assessment conducted last quarter, IFES and ECN staff prepared a preliminary consolidated report on the status of the USAID-funded ballot printing and numbering print machines currently at state printer, JEMC, and these machines' readiness for printing ballot papers should an election be announced. ECN required JEMC to prepare a detailed further report on the machines' current conditions, justification for requested spare parts, cost and lifespan of spare parts and schedule for procurement of parts and necessary repair works. JEMC responded with a report that included a request that ECN purchase new ballot printing machines.

Results: Provision of ongoing high-level technical guidance and assistance with the voter registration process. Influence on ECN decision to conduct training for personnel involved in this program and stakeholder briefings.

Activity 2.2 – Capacity Building

a) Implementing a Program of Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Training

Summary: IFES continued to take the lead coordination role, working with the ECN and its BRIDGE partners, UNDP and International IDEA, to plan for and implement BRIDGE activities. IFES funded and actively supported the implementation of a series of six two-day regional Election Management BRIDGE workshops this quarter, and provided logistics coordination and facilitation support for: a three-day Introduction to Election Management BRIDGE workshop for new DEOs; a three-day BRIDGE workshop for senior trainers at the Technical Institute for Training Instructions. IFES also supported the development of course materials for an International IDEA-funded BRIDGE course for CSOs on election observation and election dispute resolution, to be held in Janakpur in mid-April.



DEO participant at Nepalgunj electoral management training, February 2012

IFES funded, prepared, and implemented a series of six two-day regional Election Management BRIDGE workshops for lower level DEO staff. The course content for these workshops was based on the Introduction to Election Management BRIDGE workshops IFES has conducted in Nepal for mid and senior level ECN district and HQ staff. A total of 138 staff attended these workshops, as detailed in the following table:

No.	Venue	Dates	No. of Participants		No. of Facilitators	
			Men	Women	Men	Women
1	Dhangadi	February 23-24	18	0	3	1
2	Nepalgunj	February 28 - 29	20	2	3	1
3	Kathmandu	March 11-12	23	2	5	3
4	Pokhara	March 16-17	20	2	4	1
5	Biratnagar	March 25-26	24	3	4	1
6	Birgunj	March 27-28	22	2	4	1
	TOTAL		127	11	23	8

IFES provided logistics support and facilitation for the Introduction to Election Management BRIDGE workshop, funded by UNDP-ESP, for new DEOs, on March 20 – 24, in Dhulikhel, for 16 participants. IFES also provided logistics coordination and facilitation services for 21 senior trainers at a three-day BRIDGE workshop, focusing on Gender and Elections, at the Technical Institute for Training Institutions (TITI).

Results: Funded, prepared and implemented a series of six regional Election Management BRIDGE workshops this quarter for 138 ECN staff. Provided content, logistics coordination and facilitation support for: the six regional two-day administration and financial management training course; the 3-day Introduction to Election Management BRIDGE workshop for new DEOs officers, for 16 participants; and the three-day BRIDGE workshop at Technical Institute for Training Institutions, for 21 senior trainers.

b) Organizational Capacity Building

Summary: IFES Public Information Specialist provided key technical support on ECN's public outreach efforts and his advice is highly valued by the senior ECN management team, including the IT team. IFES has been liaising closely with the EEIC team in developing the ECN's Electoral Education and Information Center's (EEIC) library services. IFES is playing a significant role in shaping ECN's training plans and developing the capacities of the ECN training team, and in its guidance on products such as the training materials for the voter roll display, claims and objections process; redevelopment of the ECN website; development of ECN outreach materials, and in developing the capacities of the ECN's education team.

IFES' National Training Advisor provided capacity building support to ECN in the development of the curriculum for two, half-day orientation training program for lower level ECN HQ staff, including administrative assistants and drivers, who had never before been offered any training on the ECN's role and their place within it. Forty eight staff, of whom 6 were women, participated in the program. The training covered issues such as the ECN's mandate, role and responsibilities; support roles of these staff within the ECN's activities; communication skills; ECN's gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment policies and team building. IFES also funded and provided facilitation and logistics support for these training sessions.

ECN held a two-day district election administration and financial management training workshop in each region. IFES provided funding and capacity building support in the preparation of the course outline and content and preparing trainers. IFES worked with ECN HQ administrative managers to ensure that materials prepared for the training were interactive and

provided coaching to them in interactive presentation techniques. Attendees at the administrative training were the same as those who attended the BRIDGE workshops.

IFES worked with ECN staff to develop training materials for the voter registration voter roll display, claims and objections and reopening of voter registration process. IFES supported ECN staff to develop a training course outline and trainer's guide, as well as the training materials, for the training of the 6000 staff, including the VDC and municipal ward secretaries and computer operators, who will be involved in this process.

IFES has continued to work with the ECN's voter education team to improve its capacity to plan for and produce outreach programs. IFES supported the ECN team in developing concepts and broadcasting plans for information on the claims, objections and reopening of local level voter registration program, and on general outreach materials. ECN has been receptive to this capacity-building support and some progress is being made. For the voter registration campaign, ECN commenced development work early enough so that Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were ready for broadcast before the program commenced. There is some movement in ECN towards acknowledging that short, targeted messages are more effective, though progress is still patchy.

IFES has been liaising closely with the EEIC team, to provide EEIC with the library development consultant, from end March to September 2012. This consultant will support the development of sustainable library services for the EEIC, which will encompass electronic and paper resources, and be focused on academic research, ECN archives, information for ECN staff and general public users. This will assist IFES' ECN training objectives by developing institutional memory retention and knowledge management. Working closely with ECN EEIC staff and UNDP-ESP advisors, as at end quarter the consultant had been appointed and had commenced assessing staff capacities, training needs, library collections policies and software requirements.

Results: More professional approaches to developing training and education programs. Preparation of curriculum and course content for staff induction sessions, regional administration training workshops, and voter registration training sessions. Preparation of course outline for IDEA funded CSO BRIDGE on election observation and election dispute resolution workshop.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

Activity 3.1 Capacity Building Support to the ECN on the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Voter Education Campaign

Summary: The IFES team has continued to maintain an excellent working relationship with the ECN voter education team and provided ongoing and daily capacity building support. A key focus of IFES' work on voter education has been ensuring the involvement of ECN in the design and implementation of new and revised outreach products.

For the IFES-funded redevelopment, IFES has ensured that ECN is involved in all stages of the project – planning, selection of contractor, site redesign and content management. With IFES liaison assistance, ECN's IT department has played a major role in the site redesign and content structure, and now will be able to take responsibility for the technical management of the site. At

the end of the reporting period, ECN had not yet appointed any staff responsible for content management. The redevelopment plan requires the contractor provides six months of mentoring and training assistance to relevant ECN staff, to ensure content management skills transfer.

IFES has also supported ECN to improve the focus and brevity of its public messaging. Working with ECN staff, IFES supported the design of a booklet explaining the ECN's organization, history and activities. ECN itself initiated contact with a popular Nepali comedy group to develop its new TV PSA for voter registration, and was supported by IFES in developing a brief script for this PSA and a national radio PSA.

IFES commenced preparatory work for a survey to assist the ECN to target its voter education needs and obtain M&E data relevant to the ECN's voter education and capacity building programs supported by IFES.

Results: Ongoing IFES capacity building voter education and excellent working relationship maintained with the ECN voter education team. Specific capacity building support provided for: ECN website redesign and development; planning and designing a public opinion survey targeting ECN's voter education and service needs; and designing effective ECN outreach materials.

Activity 3.2 Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns

Summary: IFES continued to work with the ECN on its voter education activities. IFES has supported the redevelopment of the ECN's website, and the development of a new ECN voter education calendar. IFES supported the printing of the ECN's voter registration Q&A brochure and an information leaflet to be disseminated during the roll display, claims and objections and reopening of registration program. IFES also assisted ECN to develop messages and scripts for radio and TV PSAs.



IFES-produced ECN Voter Registration Brochure

In January 2012 IFES selected a contractor to redesign ECN's website. The project requires the contractor redevelop the ECN website with substantial ECN involvement and then provide training and support services for a further period of 6 months to ensure that the site is sustainable. IFES is acting as an advisor and a liaison between the contractor and ECN in the entire website redesign and redevelopment activity. During this reporting period the focus has been on redesigning the ECN home page and dependent pages, identifying content structure, and identifying existing materials that can be slotted into the new design. As at end quarter a new design concept was with ECN for approval. While ECN's IT department has been involved closely in the project, as at end quarter ECN had not yet assigned any responsibilities for content provision and management, which is hampering the progress of the project.

IFES responded to a last minute ECN request to design, develop and print an ECN voter education calendar for 2069 (2012/2013). IFES supported ECN in calendar design, selection of key voter education photographs and development of targeted short voter education messages to accompany them. IFES will fund the production of 40,000 copies of the calendar early next quarter.

During the quarter, IFES also worked with ECN staff and all Commissioners to design and develop a 36-page promotional/general information booklet on the ECN and its activities, the printing of which will be funded by ECN in April 2012. IFES will be assisting in quality control during the actual printing process, as per ECN's request. The final version is a significant improvement on that initially proposed by ECN.

In consultation with the ECN education team IFES produced the first Braille voter registration education material in Nepal for distribution to delegates at the National Federation of the Disabled Nepal's (NFDN) annual General Assembly in Biratnagar in February, 2012. The materials focused on the voting rights of the people with disabilities. IFES sub-grantee, Youth Initiative, distributed 2,000 leaflets. The 150 visually impaired delegates disseminated the materials in their home districts. There are approximately 200,000 visually impaired persons in Nepal.

The ECN's plan for the claims, objections and reopening of registration in April-June 2012 included the production and broadcast of two voter registration TV PSAs, separately targeting urban and rural audiences. IFES assisted ECN with the development of messages and scripts for these PSAs, and development of the broadcast schedule that would provide economic and effective audience coverage. However, at end quarter it appeared that ECN would rely for TV promotion of the new phase voter registration on a single motivational PSA featuring the comedy group MaHa. IFES supported the development of the message for this 60-second PSA, approved by ECN at end quarter, and whose production will be funded by IFES early next quarter.

ECN and IFES have worked jointly during the quarter on developing radio PSA for the new phase of the voter registration program. IFES has assisted ECN to develop a short motivational script for broadcast on national radio networks. This script was approved by ECN at end quarter, and IFES will fund production and broadcast of this PSA from early next quarter.

IFES assisted ECN in printing an additional 100,000 copies of the ECN voter registration Q&A brochure and 500,000 copies of the ECN leaflet. At end quarter these were dispatched to all 75 districts, along with the voter lists for display, to be disseminated during the roll display, claims and objections and reopening of registration program. IFES also provided National Democratic Institute (NDI) 300 copies of ECN leaflets and nine flipcharts on voter registration process for use at nine district-level workshops with political party members. NDI then printed 300 additional copies of the IFES-designed flipcharts for use in the seven districts in which the program continued.

ECN has continued to be extremely pleased with the quality of the outreach products produced with IFES' support. As it is now printing some of its own educational materials, there is a need for ECN to take greater interest in improving its graphic design and production quality control skills.

Results: Support for printing 100,000 copies of ECN brochure, 500,000 copies of ECN leaflets. Production and dissemination of the first voter education materials in Nepal in Braille. Support for development of two potential and one 60-second TV PSAs, and one 30-second radio PSA. Improved design of ECN website. ECN voter education calendar and booklet publicizing the activities of ECN designed.

Activity 3.3 Sub grants to selected NGOs to Develop and Deliver Voter Education Efforts

Summary: All five CSO sub-grantees continued to conduct and completed their scheduled activities to end March, mobilizing their field partners and network to educate their target groups - youth, women, Dalits, and Kamaiyas – on voter registration. All five CSOs exceeded their targets for number of people reached through their programs. The CSOs communicated with the DEOs regularly to provide updates on their activities and invite the DEOs to their programs and to receive their expert advice, guidance, feedback and cooperation during implementation of all events.



IFES-funded JVAS Community Meeting on Voter Registration, Janakpur, February 2012

During this quarter, IFES' five CSO sub-grantees – Dalit National Federation (DNF), Janaki Women's Awareness Society (JVAS), Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO), Nepal National Social Welfare Association (NNSWA), and Youth Initiative (YI) received a cost extension for their programs from January 1 through to February 29 and a subsequent no-cost extension for the month of March. The total number of CSO working districts was reduced from 26 to 22. The four omitted districts were in DNF's and YI's working areas; in DNF's case, to ease program management and in YI's case, due to the closure of their resource centers. A summary of target and actual beneficiaries (excluding from mass media) for January and February is shown below. During the no-cost extension in March, the focus was on planning activities in support of the new phase of voter registration due to commence in mid-April. There were minimal field level activities.

CSO/Activity	# of Districts	# of VDCs/ Municipalities	Target Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries Reached Q2, FY2012	% of Target Achieved
DNF	5	30			
Household visits			16,500	15,858	96%
Educational sessions at places of			1,250	1,631	130%

work/household					
Other Community level awareness raising educational activities			1,850	2,450	132%
JWAS	5	50			
Household visits			45,000	92,775	206%
Other Community level awareness raising educational activities			1,250	3,233	259%
NNDSWO	9	47			
Dissemination of VE through Communication Center/Stalls in public mass gathering			20,500	34,050	166%
Other Community level awareness raising educational activities			5,500	17,534	319%
NNSWA	5	50			
Outreach through Prahasan (a short comic skit)			6,000	9,246	154%
Mobilization of Freed Kamaiya Society for ensuring the voter registration			120	120	100%
Other Community level awareness raising educational activities			3,652	5,942	163%
YI	4	40			
Student focused educational sessions (at educational institutions)			14,400	12,927	90%
Other Community level awareness raising educational activities			1,360	1,452	107%
Total	28*	217	117,382	197,218	168%

*Programs overlap in six districts

DNF worked in close partnership with five different Dalit member organizations in selected VDCs in Saptari, Rautahat, Banke, Nawalparasi and Surkhet districts. Through household visits and existing community group meetings such as mothers groups, farmers groups, teachers groups, etc. in this quarter DNF's partner organizations reached around 19,939 Dalits. Through 32 formal and informal meetings, DNF communicated and coordinated activities with the relevant DEOs.

JWAS worked with the network of female community health volunteers (FCHVs) and their local NGO partners in selected VDCs in Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Sindhuli and Bara districts to reach women and their household members. Through household visits and CSO-facilitated community meetings, this quarter JWAS reached over 92,775 household members. JWAS also held over 20 formal and informal meetings with DEOs in these districts. The FCHV network and the CSO facilitated events continue to enable JWAS to reach vulnerable populations.

NNDSWO worked through its district chapters in selected VDCs in nine districts in the far western region - Kailali, Kanchanpur, Dadeldhura, Doti, Baitadi, Darchula, Bajhang, Bajura, and Achham- to raise the awareness of voter registration among the Dalit groups in target communities. By educating and mobilizing Dalit groups to conduct their own orientation sessions at the community level and disseminating information through 260 community level educational sessions and 6 large public events, in this quarter NNDSWO has reached almost 51,584 Dalits. NNDSWO disseminated 50,000 leaflets at these activities.

NNSWA worked in the districts of Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur. NNSWA uses Freed Kamaiya Society (FKS) (Mukta Kamaiya Samaj) to conduct household visits in FKS camps and conduct short comic skits and educational sessions to mothers groups and youth groups of the FKS. In this quarter NNSWA implemented 194 community level educational sessions with over 5,942 attendees, and 20 short comic skit performances, in local Tharu language, reaching over 9,246 freed Kamaiyas. Coordination with ECN was maintained through 37 meetings with DEOs.

YI mobilized a total of 40 trained ‘youth champions’ in the districts of Morang, Dhanusha, Dang, and Kailali to conduct voter registration orientation sessions at educational institutions for youth at least 16 years old, community gatherings and at YI’s resource centers. This quarter YI educated over 12,927 students through 360 awareness raising events conducted at educational institutions; and close to 1,452 youth through 48 community gatherings and resource center activities. YI maintained regular coordination with the DEOs and their support staff through over 27 meetings.

Data form January-February 2012 shows that there were approximately 79,456 eligible voters encountered during household visits alone, who had not yet registered. The vast majority of these people indicated a willingness to register if registration was accessible. The ECN’s reopening of registration at VDC and municipal ward level in mid-April will hopefully make it more so.

At the community/school meetings, workshops and street theatre performances, a sample of attendees was tested both before and after the education sessions, to give some indicative measure of information transfer. Data was collected for this quarter from 3,182 participants. Average scores were 61.2% for the pre-event survey and 91.2% for the post-test survey; thus indicating a significant rise (30 percentage points) in knowledge of voter registration directly impacted by the CSOs education program. Detailed results are as follows:

	# of Participants	% of Correct Answers		Increase in VR knowledge (in % points)
		Pre Test	Post Test	
Total	3,182	61.2%	91.2%	+30.0%
Disaggregated by CSOs:				
DNF	949	55.5%	83.6%	28.1%
JWAS	264	66.9%	88.1%	21.2%
NNDSWO	462	43.5%	94.0%	50.5%
NNSWA	591	63.8%	93.2%	29.4%
Youth Initiative	916	76.4%	97.3%	20.9%

IFES made field trips to three districts in this quarter to monitor and evaluate CSOs’ performance. During the visits IFES met the DEO staff to solicit feedback and seek further coordination between the CSOs and DEOs. IFES’s eight field monitors, selected from former ECN voter registration local staff, also reported on a sample of the CSOs’ activities through to end February/ USAID team of two D&G officers also conducted a field visit to the Central Terai with the IFES Country Director and program coordinator. The monitoring visits made by IFES

staff, field monitors and USAID confirmed robust field level operations - down to the household level.

IFES emphasized management improvement issues in a workshop with the sub grantees in early January 2012 and also worked very closely with the five sub-grantees to improve their reporting, monitoring, control and evaluation systems. IFES has had to make very few queries on either operational or financial reports this quarter. One of the sub-grantees, DNF, that earlier required some special management assistance has shown substantial improvement in project management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.



Assessing Dalit Women's Knowledge of Voter Registration, IFES-funded JWAS Meeting,

Following discussions with USAID, all five CSOs received cost extension modifications to their sub grants from April 1 to July 31 2012, to continue with their field level activities to support ECN's imminent voter roll display, claims and objections and reopening of registration places. Some readjustment of focus districts will be made with reference to registration data and in consultation with DEOs. YI will be concentrating their activities targeting urban youth residing in six municipalities of four districts – Kathmandu (2), Bhaktapur, (2) Lalitpur (1), and Dang (1).

IFES conducted a two-day workshop for its five sub-awardee CSOs in Kathmandu on March 28 and 29, where participants planned their ECN support activities for the display, claims and objections system, and voter registration camp period, scheduled to commence April 14. On the second day, representatives from the ECN, Carter Center, UNDP Electoral Support Program, European Union (EU) and two EU-funded CSOs joined the workshop. Participants presented their community level voter education programs' successes and challenges, shared upcoming activities, and collaborated to improve voter education in Nepal.

Results: Reaching 197,218 people (Male 96,650 and Female 100,568) through 27,867 total events, including 20 short comic skits, 26,720 household visits, 56 orientation sessions at places of work, 6 public gatherings/cultural events, 700 community group meetings and 360 student focused activities conducted by the five CSOs in 22 districts across the Terai and Hills. Communicating and coordinating with DEOs through over 158 formal and informal meetings. Increase in participants' knowledge of voter registration. Positive feedback on CSO activities from DEOs in 3 districts visited. Ninety-eight instances of media coverage of the CSO programs in newspapers, local FMs and national television. Improved project management skills evident in all sub awardees. Finalization of the cost extensions for all 5 sub grantees for April-June 2012 program activities. Planning workshop for cost extension period activities successfully implemented.

4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process

Activity 4.1 – On-going Analysis and Reporting on the Evolving Electoral Environment

Summary: IFES continued monitoring, analyzing and reporting on the progress of electoral related developments with regard to the Constituent Assembly and ECN activities. Regular reports on program activity and analysis of the political and electoral environment were provided to U.S. Embassy officials, USAID, and other relevant stakeholders. Decisions made by the ECN related to data verification process, voter roll public display, claims and objections and missed voter registration were translated and provided to all relevant stakeholders, accompanied by IFES analysis.

Results: U.S. Embassy and USAID staff and other relevant stakeholders were kept abreast of electoral developments through regular briefings. Regular updates and briefings to international stakeholders on the voter registration process. Regular IFES program updates and briefings to USAID DGO for inclusion in DGO weekly newsletter

Activity 4.2 – Provision of News Clipping Service

Summary: IFES Nepal continued to deliver its daily news clipping service throughout the reporting period. This service is a compilation of online news reports that are relevant to the evolving political and electoral situation in Nepal. News reports are taken from the major news outlets in Nepal, such as the *Republica*, *Kathmandu Post* and the *Himalayan Times* as well as other reputable online sources of news and analysis on Nepali politics.

Results: Daily news clippings service provided to interested subscribers, serving to keep all domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal.

5. Provision for unforeseen windows of opportunity

Nothing to report this reporting period.

6. General Management

In January, the Social Welfare Council (SWC) responded to the draft project agreement submitted by IFES. SWC requested IFES to provide further information on budgetary and performance management issues. A response from IFES and amended project agreement draft was discussed with SWC at end March 2012. SWC has been slow in dealing with project agreements, and it is likely to be several weeks before it deals with IFES' amended proposal.

IV. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the reporting period the IFES Nepal program has achieved the following major results:

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

Technical Assistance

- Ongoing technical advice to the ECN in the development of the draft political party law and draft segments of the electoral law, to promote its alignment with international standards.
- Further consideration by political parties and CSOs representing disadvantaged groups of IFES advice on appropriate electoral systems and simplified electoral quotas.
- Advice to ECN and stakeholders of reforms required to the legal framework for local government elections.
- Advice to ECN on revisions to regulations on voter registration and on a future legal framework appropriate for the ECN's continuous voter registration system.

Organizational Capacity Building

- Further increase in knowledge of the ECN's legal department, civil society and political party stakeholders of international good practices in legal frameworks for political parties and elections, particularly in relation to electoral systems, electoral quotas and voter registration

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

Technical Assistance

- Provision of on-going high-level technical guidance and assistance with the voter registration process, particularly on the framework and training materials for the forthcoming voter roll display, claims and objections and re-opening of voter registration program.
- Influence on ECN decision to conduct training for personnel involved in this program and stakeholder briefings.
- Advice on ballot paper printing capacities and future requirements.

Organizational Capacity Building

- Implementation of six regional Election Management BRIDGE workshops for 138 ECN staff.
- Logistical support and facilitation of: the three-day Introduction to Election Management BRIDGE workshop for new DEOs, for 16 participants; and the three-day BRIDGE workshop at Technical Institute for Training Instructions, for 21 senior trainers.
- Funding of two half-day induction sessions for 48 ECN head quarter lower level staff.
- Preparation of curriculum and course content for staff induction sessions, regional administration training workshops, and voter registration training sessions.
- Preparation of course outline for IDEA funded CSO BRIDGE on election observation and election dispute resolution workshop.
- Professional support made available for EEIC library development.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

Capacity Building Support to the ECN on the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Voter Education Campaign

- On-going provision of voter education capacity building and excellent working relationship maintained between IFES and ECN voter education team.

- Specific capacity building support provided for: ECN website redesign and development; planning and designing a public opinion survey targeting ECN's voter education and service needs; and designing effective ECN outreach materials.

Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns

- Support for printing 100,000 copies of ECN brochure, 500,000 copies of ECN leaflets.
- Production and dissemination of the first voter education materials in Nepal in Braille.
- Support for development of two potential and one 60-second TV PSAs, and one 30-second radio PSA.
- Improved design of ECN website.
- Design of ECN voter education calendar and ECN booklet.

Sub grants to selected NGOs to develop and Deliver Voter Education Efforts

- Outreach to 197,218 people (Male 96,650 and Female 100,568) through 27,867 total events, including 20 short comic skits, 26,720 household visits, 56 orientation sessions at places of work, 6 public gatherings/cultural events, 700 community group meetings and 360 student focused activities conducted by the five CSOs in 22 districts across the Terai and Hills.
- Regular communication and coordination with DEOs through over 158 formal and informal meetings. Motivation of unregistered persons to register to vote.
- Increase in participants' knowledge of voter registration.
- Positive feedback on CSO activities from DEOs in 3 districts visited.
- 98 instances of media coverage of the CSO programs in newspapers, local FMs and national television.
- Improved project management skills evident in all sub awardees.
- Issue of cost extensions for five CSO sub grantees to conduct additional voter education activities during April-June, 2012 period.

4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process

On-going Analysis and Reporting on the Evolving Electoral Environment

- U.S. Embassy, USAID staff and other relevant stakeholders were kept abreast of electoral developments through regular briefings
- Regular updates and briefings to relevant stakeholders on the voter registration process
- Regular IFES program updates and briefings to USAID DGO for inclusion in DGO weekly newsletter

Provision of News Clipping Service

- Daily news clippings service provided to interested subscribers, serving to keep all domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal

V. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

For the next quarter IFES will focus on the following activities:

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

- Support ECN to finalize review of amalgamated and synchronized draft segments of the electoral law and draft political party law
- Continue to work with stakeholders to gain acceptance and broad consensus on a simplified electoral system for Nepal
- Support the drafting of the voter registration segment of draft electoral law
- If constitution draft finalized, supporting the drafting of electoral systems related segments of draft electoral law
- Encourage ECN to finalize its review of the draft political party law and facilitate/fund stakeholder discussion of the revised draft

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

- Continue to provide technical and capacity building support to the ECN for the implementation of the continuous voter registration program, pressing ECN to develop coherent operational and business frameworks that can support CVR.
- Support ECN's development of strategies, processes and directives for post public review/display, claims and objections phase of voter registration including preparation of a final voter roll.
- Support ECN training needs for voter roll display, claims and objections and re-opening of local registration centers.
- Support ECN to plan ballot paper printing strategies for the next elections.
- Continue to work with the ECN to improve the professionalism of training for its staff, particularly with regard to curriculum and training material development.
- Support ECN to develop reporting and review mechanisms for its 2012 Annual Review of progress
- Support the development of the ECN library and archiving, and training of selected ECN staff in library management
- Support ECN to develop and include gender targets in its strategic plan, and to ensure gender inclusion is taken into account in programmatic activities.
- Support the implementation of a three day BRIDGE workshop in Janakpur for CSOs on electoral observation and election dispute resolution
- Support the ECN BRIDGE team to develop and implement three, three-day BRIDGE training workshops on gender and elections for selected stakeholder groups.
- Support the ECN BRIDGE team to develop and implement two, three-day BRIDGE training workshops on election management for media
- Work with the ECN BRIDGE team to develop content for an Elections and Technology BRIDGE workshop for ECN HQ staff.
- Continue to work with the ECN to develop and implement monthly tutorial programs for core ECN staff using tailored BRIDGE methodology and materials.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

- Continue to provide technical, capacity building and material support to the ECN's voter education campaign for the ECN's voter registration program, including the broadcast of voter registration radio PSAs.

- Continue to work with the ECN to develop and implement a voter education strategy and materials to support continuous voter registration.
- Assist ECN to control the print quality of the ECN promotional booklet.
- Support the printing of the ECN voter education calendar.
- Support ECN initiatives for the development of additional voter education materials or events it identifies as essential during the implementation of the claims, objections and re-opening of local voter registration phase of its program.
- Continue to assist the ECN with the re-development of an attractive, informative and user-friendly ECN official website, including the completion of phase 1 and 2 redevelopment, uploading of content, and commencement of sustainability training in this quarter.
- Continue to support the development of resources for the ECN's new Electoral Education and Information Centre Library.
- Continue the implementation and monitoring of sub-grants with five local civil society organizations to facilitate the delivery of voter education campaigns to support the ECN's display of voters lists, claims and objections and re-opening of voter registration.
- Continue to provide technical assistance in the implementation of the public opinion survey to assist ECN in targeting its voter education campaigns and improving its services and image.

4. Monitoring, Analyzing and Reporting on the Electoral Process

- Continue to provide ongoing analysis to the U.S. Embassy, USAID and other stakeholders on the emerging electoral environment and identification of key issues.

VI. EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS

- IFES has continued to provide invaluable strategic and operational support to ECN, through making new and renewing old alliances. Without very extensive IFES operational support, the ECN's training plans for this quarter could not have been implemented. ECN is fully supportive of the strong role IFES' CSO partners are playing in educating and motivating disadvantaged groups to register to vote.
- ECN's major focuses this past quarter have been on staff training, particularly for lower level staff whose training has been long neglected, preparations for the voter list display, claims and objections and re- opening of voter registration at local level, and preparing the Electoral Education and Information Center for a soft opening at end April and public opening at end May. For all these IFES has been able to provide critical assistance. Even where IFES advice has not been taken on board, as for the framework for claims and objections, ECN on further reflection has determined to revisit the issue after the current intense period of activity has subsided.
- In preparation for the new phase of voter registration, it was a good effort by ECN to have all data amalgamation and printing of local level voters lists completed in time for distributing the lists for this process. Voters list print quality in many cases would need to be improved for an election. The number of apparent duplicates so far found on the register – around

25,000 – and concerns about the changes to data made at local level during the data verification process at end-2011 make it highly desirable that voters review their register entries.

- This is also an opportunity for those not on the register – which may be as high as 4 million people, to register, and for corrections to be made to existing data. For a number of reasons these opportunities may not be taken, or may not be used properly. The framework for claims, corrections, transfers and objections determined by ECN this past quarter does not meet reasonable standards and misunderstands the nature of a permanent voters register. It makes it difficult for people to transfer registration and possible for people to be removed from the register on inconsistent or insufficient grounds and with no notification. After nine months of no publicity in most districts about voter registration, the limited publicity during phase of the process may not be enough to stir those who have not yet registered. ECN believes that a significant number of those not yet registered do not have a citizenship certificate or live away from their district of official residence.
- ECN this quarter has shown signs of modernity in its approach to some public information activities. The EEIC project has stimulated some thought within ECN on more interesting approaches to public outreach. The radio and TV PSAs produced with IFES support have a sharp, direct feel; the design approved by ECN for its redeveloped website has a clean, interactive focus; the designs for the new voter education calendar and ECN promotional booklet are modern, and uncluttered. However, there's a concern to make these changes sustainable without external support.
- This has been a very hectic quarter for IFES' BRIDGE support, and training support in general. With the ECN's BRIDGE coordinator away on sick leave for much of the quarter, the load for organizing, developing and facilitating at BRIDGE and election management training sessions fell on IFES National Training Advisor and it was only through her efforts that the program held together.
- The additional facilitators trained by IFES in 2011 have not been used by ECN this quarter: ECN has preferred to use senior ECN staff to travel as facilitators. With the large number of BRIDGE workshops this quarter, this has meant that two if not three ECN Joint Secretaries have been out of Kathmandu for most of each week in the February/March period which affected policy development and operation of the ECN's programs – especially for the re-opening local voter registration.
- The strength of the local voter education program implemented by IFES sub awardees has been recognized in the enthusiastic manner in which DEOs in the respective districts have embraced the extension of these CSOs' activities to cover the ECN's voter list display, claims and objections and reopening of local registration centers. All CSOs have continued to over deliver on their targets, and continue to have high information transfer rates. The emerging cooperation with CSOs funded by EU for voter education is a good sign.
- The CSO sub grantees will have some difficulties to overcome in the next two months. The ECN voter registration at VDC/municipal ward level program, scheduled centrally to last from April 15 to end May, has been compressed by many DEOs to 25 days or less. This will

make it very difficult for the CSOs to mobilize effectively sufficient resources to cover the planned locations with the planned level of support. ECN's late omission of out of district registration from the local registration program may also mean it is difficult for Youth Initiative to get registration results from its planned education efforts in schools and colleges in the Kathmandu Valley.

National Democratic Institute (NDI) Quarterly Report

I. SUMMARY

The ongoing peace process in Nepal received a major boost this quarter with the completion of the discharge of former Maoist combatants choosing voluntary retirement. Political parties will now be able to focus on the critical task of writing the constitution. However, there are many challenges ahead; the foremost will be to lay the foundation for a federal state that acknowledges historical identities and discrimination and the rights of the country's many ethnic, caste and linguistic groups.

Despite the stops and starts in the peace process and constitution drafting process, the National Democratic Institute (NDI, or the Institute), along with subgrant partners Internews (IN) and The Asia Foundation (TAF), continued its program, *Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes (SPELP)*, to strengthen democratic political processes in Nepal. The program seeks to promote political party development, strengthen capacity for citizen oversight of the electoral process, and support the institutional strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament and improve its capacity to address constituent needs.

This quarter, NDI conducted regional training-of-trainers with political parties in the far-west and eastern regions of the country. One hundred and eight party activists participated in these events. The Institute also conducted the second round of community dialogues and round table discussions in ten districts.

Next quarter, NDI will conduct two five-day trainings for members of the Future Leadership Academy (FLA) and will hold community dialogue and round table discussions in an additional four districts.

II. BACKGROUND

In a major development in the peace process, the discharge of 7,500 former Maoist combatants choosing voluntary retirement was completed this February. As decided in an agreement between the Maoists and major political parties in November 2011, the combatants received a cash payment ranging from \$6,410 (Rs.500,000) to \$10,250 (Rs.800,00) depending on their rank as a part of the discharge package or "golden handshake." With the completion of the voluntary retirement process, the number of satellite camps now total 14. Meanwhile, internal differences continue to persist within the Maoist party. The Maoists declared a series of strikes across the country, demanding the removal of the label "disqualified" and the provision of resettlement benefits in line with voluntary retirement payments given to verified former Maoist combatants discharged from cantonments.

Following the completion of the voluntary retirement of former Maoist combatants, political parties agreed on an integration plan for the remaining 6,500 combatants. Although some critical issues related to rank determination remain to be resolved, it is expected that by May 13 the

Maoist army cantonments will be vacated and the weapons stored in containers that will be handed over to the Nepal Army.

On January 31, the State Restructuring Commission, tasked with suggesting an appropriate federal model for the country, submitted two reports to the government and the Constituent Assembly (CA), accelerating intense debate on federal restructuring. The majority report proposed a federal model of 11 states based on ethnicity and language, while the minority report proposed six states stretching from north to south.

On February 9, under pressure from the opposition, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M) led government revoked its decision to legalize land deals made during the decade-long civil war. The Nepali Congress (NC), the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) and other opposition parties had united against the government's decision to recognize conflict-era property purchases and registrations.

Internal differences within the UCPN-M continue to surface with the hardline faction led by Vice-Chair Mohan Baidya demanding the immediate resignation of Prime Minister Bhattarai as a protest against the integration and rehabilitation of former Maoist combatants. The Baidya faction, allegedly in preparation for another revolution, initiated the process of forming a new paramilitary force consisting of voluntarily retired and loyal disqualified combatants.

A parliamentary report issued by the International Relations and Human Rights Committee of the CA recommended the end of the recruitment of Gurkhas by foreign armies, particularly the United Kingdom. Currently there are 3,800 Gurkhas serving in the British Armed Forces, while more than 30,000 serve in the Indian Army.

While most contentious issues have been resolved, political parties remain engaged in a debate over the form of the future government; the CA's Dispute Resolution Sub-Committee suggested a mixed form of government. The Seven Points Agreement also called for the formation of a panel of experts to settle the remaining issues of state restructuring in the new constitution and called for the eventual formation of a government of national consensus. The Dispute Resolution Sub-Committee recommended a mixed electoral system to be incorporated in the new constitution. However, the parties could not come to a consensus on the ratio of representation under the first-past-the-post (FTPT) and proportional representation (PR) systems. The Sub-Committee also agreed to grant voting rights to Nepali citizens who are 18 years of age.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

A. Political Party Development

Regional Political Party Training of Trainers (ToT) in Dhangadhi and Biratnagar

NDI's political party development component is based on continuing coordination and consultation between the Institute and NDI's nine party partners⁵ to ensure that all assistance

⁵ NDI's nine political party partners in the ToT are Nepali Congress (NC), Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M), Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), Tarai Madhesh Loktrantic Party (TMLP), Madheshi Janadhikar Forum Nepal-Democratic (MJFN-D), Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP),

activities respond to the needs identified by each party and to any changes in Nepal's political context or legal framework. This quarter, NDI organized two regional political party training-of-trainers (ToT) workshops in the far-west and eastern regions of the country with all nine of its party partners.



Participants break into groups during the ToT.

The Institute organized and held a regional training of trainers in Dhangadhi from January 22 to 28, and in Biratnagar from March 24 to 30. The curriculum focused on building the internal capacity of party training units, which are charged with developing and delivering trainings to party members on the national, regional and district levels, and was based on the findings of the party baseline assessments. A total of 108 party activists participated (54 in each workshop) and represented 37 districts⁶ in the far-west and eastern regions of the country. More than

35 percent of the participants were women. Four master trainers, who had participated in the national ToT held in 2011, co-facilitated the workshop with international and national experts (Figure 1). Group discussions, group work and roleplaying allowed for substantial interaction, discussion and feedback from participants.

Figure 1: Regional ToT in Dhangadhi and Biratnagar: Modules, Facilitators and Co-Facilitators

Modules	Trainers	Co-Trainers
Dhangadhi		
The Party at the Local Level	Mark Wallem	Bhuban Pathak
Training and Facilitation Skills	Sasha Pajevic	Sushmita Subba
Public Speaking	Jay Nishaant	Shanker Giri
Roles and Functions of Political Parties in a Democratic System	Ram Guragain	Bunu Dahal
Conflict Resolution	Surya Nepal	Chhatra Tailer Narayan Dutta Mishra
Biratnagar		
The Party at the Local Level	Sasha Pajevic	Sanjay Singh

Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML), Madheshi Janadhikar Forum-Nepal (MJF-N) and Sadhbhawana Party (SP).

⁶ Districts represented were Dang, Kanchanpur, Baitadi, Doti, Achham, Bardiya, Surkhet, Bajura, Banke, Kailali, Kalikot, Dadeldhura, Dailekh, Humla, Jumla, Mugu, Bajhang, Terathum, Udaypur, Khotang, Bhojpur, Sunsari, Taplejung, Morang, Jhapa, Panchthar, Ilam, Sankhuwasabha, Dhankuta, Okhaldhunga, Siraha, Kathmandu, Saptari, Dolakha, Sindhuli, Bara and Dhanusha.

Training and Facilitation Skills	Sasha Pajevic	Sushmita Subba Bhuban Pathak
Public Speaking	Jay Nishaant	Hira Kumar Thapa
Roles and Functions of Political Parties in a Democratic System	Ram Guragain	Surendra Yadav Anand Santoshi Rai
Conflict Resolution	Surya Nepal	Mohan Khadka Hom Kumari Khapung

“I would like to thank NDI for this training. We women cadres have always worked within our parties. But this training has provided us with the opportunity to learn in a multi-partisan forum. We will definitely apply these training skills within our party.”

- Mina Singh Rakhal, CPN-UML

Representatives from USAID and the U.S. Embassy observed the training in Dhangadhi, including the Director of Democracy and Governance Maria Barron, USAID Agreement Officer’s Representative (AOR) Ramesh Adhikari, Political and Economic Officer Richard Rasmussen, and Democracy and Governance Office (DGO) Administrative Assistant Ganga Maharjan. The Inter Party Alliance⁷ (IPA) members also observed the trainings in both regions.

NDI anticipates more parties will establish training units and begin using their training resources in replicate training sessions in the next quarter.

Winning Elections: Voter Registration by Political Parties



Voter Registration program

On January 18 and 19, NDI conducted a national workshop in Kathmandu on voter registration outreach conducted by political parties. Thirty participants (23 men and seven women) took part in this event, with two individuals from each party's targeted district together with members of Inter Party Alliance (IPA). The workshop provided skills and techniques on targeting and outreach, door-to-door canvassing and procedures for registration. During the workshop, participants finalized action plans for district-level trainings for their respective districts, with timelines, activity schedules and realistic targets for the numbers of voters they could potentially register.

Acting Chief Election Commissioner Hon. Neel Kantha Uprety, Chair of the National Election Observation Committee (NEOC) Surya Prasad Shrestha and IFES Chief of Party Alan Wall highlighted the importance of the program. Election Commission of Nepal Joint Secretary Sharada Prasad Trital presented a paper on “The Technical Aspect of Voter Registration Process.” NEOC General Secretary Dr. Gopal Krishna Shivakoti presented a paper on “Voter

⁷ The Inter Party Alliance (IPA) was formed in early 2011 as an inter-party dialogue mechanism to address contentious issues by enhancing coordination and cooperation among political parties.

Registration Monitoring: Findings of Thirty-Eight Districts.” NDI Senior Country Director Mark Wallem presented on the “Role of Political Parties in Voter Registration Process: International Experiences.” Similarly, Sasha Pajevic, NDI Resident Program Director for Political Parties, conducted a session on door-to-door campaigning.

Parties Replicate Training on Voter Registration



Voter registration training in Jhapa

Following the national workshop on voter registration by political parties in Kathmandu in January, eight political parties⁸ organized replicate trainings for their district level party activists in seven districts (Figure 2). The trainings provided skills and techniques on voter targeting and outreach, door-to-door canvassing, and procedures for voter registration. The presence of district election officers (DEO) in most districts added value to the training as the DEOs updated participants on the progress of voter registration for each district. In addition,

“Our asset is our organized members, so to make them stronger and to win in the next elections, we need to work from now onwards with the voter registration process”

- Hon. Neelam K.C, CA Member, CPN-ML

the DEOs answered queries posed by participants. The Institute observed and monitored the individual party trainings in each district.

⁸ The Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M), the NC, the CPN-UML, the Tarai Madhesh Loktrantic Party (TMLP), the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum Nepal-Democratic (MJFN-D), the Madhesh Loktrantic Forum-Nepal (MJF-N), the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and the Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML).

Figure 2: Party Replicate Training on Voter Registration by District, Number of Participants and Breakdown by Gender

Party	District	Event Date	Participants		Total
			Male	Female	
UCPN-M	Rolpa	March 1	16	16	32
NC	Morang	March 2	22	14	36
CPN-UML	Dhankuta	February 29	22	7	29
TMLP	Dhanusha	February 26	24	8	32
MJFN-D	Jhapa	March 4	27	4	31
MJF-N	Saptari	March 5	36	9	45
RPP	Dang	February 29	23	7	30
CPN-ML	Jhapa	March 5	31	4	35
		Total	201	69	270

In all districts except Dhankuta and Rolpa, IPA members were present. The IPA members facilitated certain sessions and underlined the importance of producing an action plan to find unregistered voters through door-to-door canvassing. In one action plan, for example, the CPN-UML in Dhankuta planned to conduct a door-to-door awareness campaign within a three month period.

In an expression of support and solidarity, the president of TMLP traveled from Kathmandu to Dhanusha to encourage his party activists to campaign.

Future Leadership Academy (FLA)

This quarter, the Institute conducted individual meetings with eight political parties – UCPN-M, CPN-UML, MJFN-D, MJF-N, TMLP, RPP, SP and CPN-ML – to discuss the formation of the Future Leadership Academy (FLA). Under the FLA, NDI will support parties to develop knowledgeable and skilled young leaders equipped to provide substantive contributions to their party’s democratic future. Specifically, NDI will offer two national, multiparty, intensive residential trainings which will assist party youth in their future political life. NDI and the nine partner parties will select participants through a cooperative process. Each participant should be between 18 to 35 years of age. Parties will be encouraged to take into account representation from marginalized groups as well as women. Topics for the five-day Academy will be developed in the next quarter.

In addition, NDI and the parties also discussed the renewal of the memorandums of cooperation (MoC), the training plans that NDI had signed with each party, and individual party trainings for capacity building and party reform activities.

Internews

During this quarter, Internews and its three partners, Antenna Foundation Nepal (AFN), Freedom Forum (FF) and Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), focused on three key activity areas:

- producing the radio program “Loktantra Mantra” and mobilizing trained journalists to contribute to the program;
- conducting outreach and promoting a community of practice on the NepalElectionChannel.org website and disseminating monitoring reports to wider audience; and
- using social media and online tools to survey Nepalese journalists and developing a digital membership database of FNJ’s members.

Development of the Radio Program / Antenna Foundation Nepal (AFN)

After consultations with representatives from FNJ, FF, NDI, electoral experts, intellectuals and local communities, AFN finalized the format, approach and issues to be covered on its radio program. “Loktantra Mantra” (Democracy, the Mantra) is based on reporting filed by 96 journalists trained under AFN’s investigative journalism training held in 2011. By the end of March 2012, AFN produced seven episodes of the program comprised of local radio reports, interviews and testimonies from around the country. The show also included a 10-minute drama series by Nepal’s most popular comedians, Madan Krishna Shrestha and Hari Bamsa Acharya, called “MaHa.”

Community of Practice Website / Freedom Forum

This quarter, Freedom Forum updated NepalElectionChannel.org with 165 new items and mobilized social media to increase the site’s outreach. Content uploaded to the English and Nepali version included news on elections, constitution writing, political developments, expert views on electoral systems, monthly media monitoring reports on election coverage, and press freedom violation stories. Freedom Forum emphasized balancing the amount of content in both languages.

Freedom Forum also continued to produce regular monthly media monitoring on electoral issues and press violation issues and disseminated them to national and international stakeholders as well as posting them on the website.

Journalist Database and Social Media Survey / Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ)

This quarter, FNJ finished collecting membership forms and digitizing the data from more than 2,500 of its members across the country. FNJ also developed a social media survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Y7528HK>) and plans to implement it in the next quarter. The social media survey aims to find out how journalists are using social media and online tools. Feedback from the survey will better help FNJ plan on facilitating education and understand the varying levels of know-how regarding new media tools.

B. Legislative Strengthening

Community Dialogue and Round Table Discussions

Issue-based Meetings with the National Planning Commission (NPC) and Relevant Ministries

The Institute, in coordination with its partner Pro Public, organized several meetings with national stakeholders to enable parliamentarians to lobby relevant ministries on district-specific issues such as the allocation of budgets for the implementation of district-level activities. The National Planning Commission (NPC) welcomed the idea of dialogue between elected representatives and government officials, and hosted several meetings between them. NDI and Pro Public staff participated in these meetings, summarized below:

i) Technical Education - Doti

On January 9, a delegation of parliamentarians from Doti met Hon. Dr. Shiba Kumar Rai (NPC), the Joint Secretary of Ministry of Education, and the Polytechnic Director of Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training to bring to the attention of relevant authorities the issues of this district and to request that they incorporate these issues in the national plan. The meeting was successful in garnering support from the NPC for technical assistance to the Seti Technical School.



Parliamentarians and NPC members at an interaction meeting for Doti District

ii) Flooding - Kanchanpur

On January 19, NDI and Pro Public organized a meeting at the Ministry of Finance for parliamentarians of Kanchanpur district. Minister of State for Finance Hari Raj Limbu presided over the meeting, which also included Director of the Department of Water Borne Disaster Prevention Hon. Ramesh Lekhak and representatives from the Finance Ministry. Hon. Lekhak explained the government's plan to control floods while representatives from the Ministry of Finance outlined the budget allocation for the district.

iii) Tourism - Kapilbastu, Surkhet, Dailekh and Siraha

On January 22, NDI and Pro Public organized a meeting at the NPC to discuss issues from the districts of Kapilbastu, Surkhet, Dailekh and Siraha. In the first round of community dialogues, the most pressing issue identified by all four districts was potential tourism development and conservation of archeological sites. Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation Hon. Lokendra Bista Magar presided over the meeting, which was also attended by parliamentarians from Kapilbastu and Surkhet. The prospects and challenges of developing tourism activities and conserving archeological sites were discussed in detail during the meeting.

iv) Agriculture - Nuwakot and Syanja

On January 23, a meeting was held at NPC to follow up on progress made by the districts of Nuwakot and Syanja in bringing the issues of these two districts to the attention of relevant authorities. Hon. Jagadishwor Narsingh K.C. (NC), parliamentarian of Nuwakot,

participated in the discussion. Representatives from the NPC assured the parliamentarian of their support in establishing a cold storage facility for both districts.

Second Round of Community Dialogues



State Minister for Land Reforms Jwala Kumari Sah addressing the community dialogue in Bara District

The Institute and Pro Public conducted a second round of community dialogues in ten districts: Dhankuta, Siraha, Bara, Nuwakot, Syangja, Kapilvastu, Dailekh, Doti, Surkhet and Kanchanpur. Thirty-one parliamentarians from eight political parties (Figure 3) participated and led the dialogues. These dialogues provided an effective forum for parliamentarians and constituents to interact with each other. While the parliamentarians talked about the progress made since the first round of community dialogues held in early

2011, they also responded to new queries put forward by constituents. The dialogues helped enhance the representative function of parliamentarians by providing a much needed platform to showcase their efforts in working for the betterment of their respective constituencies.

The community dialogues were broadcast live by local radio stations in all ten districts. In addition, two local television stations, Rara and Indreni, covered the dialogue in Surkhet.

Major stakeholders such as the chief district officer (CDO), the local development officer (LDO), heads of government agencies, civil society activists, representatives of political parties, media representatives and the public actively participated in the community dialogues. Representatives of NDI and Pro Public observed the dialogues in all districts.

Figure 3: Second Round of Community Dialogues in Ten Districts

District/ Date	Issue	Names of participating parliamentarians	Participants					
			Community Dialogue			Monitoring Committee Meeting		
			M	F	T	M	F	T
Kanchanpur (Feb 1)	Prospective and Challenges of Resolving the Problem of Flood, River Cutting and Environmental Protection in Kanchanpur	Hon. Tekendra Pd. Bhatta (UCPN-M) Hon. Ramesh Lekhak (NC)	81	12	93	14	2	16
Surkhet (Feb 4)	Prospective and Challenges of Tourism Promotion in Surkhet	Hon. Nar Bahadur Bista (UCPN-M) Hon. Khadga B. Sarki (NC) Hon. Kamala Sharma (CPN-UML)	106	17	123	29	3	32

Doti (Feb 6)	Prospective and Challenges of Technical Education in Doti	Hon. Khem Bam (UCPN-M) Hon. Kalpana Sob (NC) Hon. Harka Bahadur Singh (CPN-UML)	85	14	99	15	3	18
Bara (Feb12)	Remedies and Challenges of the Problems Created Due to Deforestation in Bara	Hon. Jwala Kumari Shah (UCPN-M) Hon. Shobhakar Parajuli (NC) Hon. Gopal Thakur (CPN-UML) Hon. Jay Prakash Yadav (TMLP)	100	15	115	28	4	32
Nuwakot (Feb13)	Possibilities and Challenges of Agriculture Production, Management and Irrigation in Nuwakot	Hon. Jagadiswor Narsingh K.C (NC)	61	55	116	24	5	29
Dhankuta (Feb15)	Construction of Existing Physical Infrastructure of Dhanukata District: Status, Needs and Challenges.	Hon. Durga Linkha (CPN-UML) Hon. Leela Subba, NC	75	26	101	5	14	19
Kapilbastu (Feb 18)	Prospective and Challenges of Development of the Tourism Places and Cultural Heritage of Kapilbastu	Hon. Deep K. Upadhyay (NC) Hon. Sangha K. Tharu (UCPN-M) Hon. Shanti Devi Chamar (CPN-UML) Hon. Abhishekh Pratap Shah (MJFN)	82	18	100	34	9	43
Syangja (Feb 21)	Prospective and Challenges of Agriculture and Water Resources Development for Economic Development of Syangja	Hon. Goma Pathak (UCPN-M) Hon. Mohan Prasad Pandey (NC) Hon. Padma Kumari Aryal (CPN-UML) Hon. Chandra Bahadur Gurung (RPP-Nepal)	90	38	128	26	4	30
Dailekh (Feb 25)	Prospective and Challenges of Construction of Infra-Structure and Conservation of Natural Heritage for Tourism Development of Dailekh	Hon. Bharat Kumari Sharma (UCPN-M) Hon. Ganesh Bd Khadka (NC) Hon. Raj Bahadur Buda (CPN-UML) Hon. Kunti Kumari Shahi (RPP-N)	84	19	103	20	9	29
Siraha (March 10)	Prospective and Challenges of Integrated Development of Sahalesh and Other Tourism Areas of Siraha	Hon. Mahendra Paswan, UCPN-M Hon. Jaya Ghimire, CPN-UML Hon. Raj Lal Yadav, MJFN-R, Minister without Portfolio Hon. Biswendra Paswan, DJP	98	54	152	16	4	20
Total			862	268	1130	211	57	268

Next Generation Parliamentarians Group (NGPG)⁹

Meeting with the Coordination Committee

⁹ The NGPG is a youth parliamentary group created to enhance the role of young and first term parliamentarians. The NGPG coordination committee consists of 21 parliamentarians with diverse party, gender and ethnicity profiles.

On February 6, NDI held a meeting with NGPG Coordinator Hon. Sunil Babu Pant, NGPG Joint Coordinator Hon. Chandrika Prasad Yadav and NGPG Secretary Hon. Ratna Gurung. The discussion focused on NGPG's management, strategy and future activities. The Institute advised NGPG on ways to become more results-oriented by introducing effective management practices and involving all members in the decision-making process. NGPG members discussed their plan to hold meetings with their Indian counterparts on matters of bilateral importance such as hydropower and water management. During the meeting, NGPG members also decided to organize the next seminar on the issue of deforestation.

On March 13, NDI met with members of the NGPG Coordination Committee at the UCPN-M parliamentary party office in Singha Darbar. During the meeting, the Institute suggested NGPG members work on finalizing the agenda and the names of participants for the upcoming seminar on deforestation. The Institute reaffirmed its continued support to NGPG in terms of technical and logistical support.

Improving the Parliamentary Library

During this quarter, NDI subgrantee The Asia Foundation (TAF) met with the secretary general and spokesperson of the Parliament Secretariat to discuss the improvement the Parliament library. During the meeting, Krishna Mani Bhandari, the retired chief librarian of Tribhuvan University Central Library, presented his assessment report of the library, which included recommendations and a plan of action for the next several years. Following the discussion, the secretary general and spokesperson agreed to share the report recommendations with their colleagues at the Secretariat and respond with their feedback. It was also agreed that Binod Bhattarai of The Writing Workshop, a TAF consultant, would continue to liaise between TAF and the Secretariat, and Mr. Bhandari would serve as the advisor to this activity.

Per a recommendation from Mr. Bhandari, in the upcoming quarter TAF intends to complete the indexing of materials that the library currently holds.

Promoting Civic Awareness of the Legislative Process

In late 2011, TAF, in collaboration with Chemonics International, the implementing contractor for USAID/Nepal's Nepal Transition Initiative (NTI), set up the Parliament Secretariat Media Center and provided staff training on handling the technical equipment. This quarter, the Parliament Secretariat, with assistance from TAF, organized a formal inauguration event of the media center, which was hosted by the Parliament Secretariat Spokesperson and co-chaired by the Speaker of the House and the US Ambassador to Nepal. Also in attendance were: the deputy speaker of the House, the secretary general of the Parliament Secretariat, the chief whips of four major political parties, the USAID mission director, the director of USAID Democracy and Governance Office, representatives from TAF and NDI, and representatives from the media. TAF remains in close contact with the Parliament Secretariat to plan further activities under the CEPPS program and to provide regular advice and support as requested by the Parliament Secretariat.

Furthermore, TAF completed a one-year partnership with Interface Nepal for broadcasting a 30-minute radio program, “*Hamro Kanoon*,” over 25 different FM radio stations across the country (ensuring an adequate geographical coverage of all regions). Each episode introduces and discusses various aspects of the Nepali legislative process. The themes of the episodes aired during this reporting period included: Right to Information Act 2064; Consumer Protection Act 2054; Prevention of Corruption Act 2059 and the Education Act 2028. During each weekly program, TAF and Interface Nepal also sought opinions from relevant experts. For example, the chief commissioner from the National Information Commission was a guest during the Right to Information Act program; the director general from the Department of Commerce and Chairperson of the Consumer Rights Investigation Forum were guests during the Consumer Protection Act program.

TAF and Interface Nepal have signed an agreement for the second year of operation of this program. Additionally, the two have agreed to add five more stations to cover additional populations in the mountainous regions.

Building CSO Capacity to Monitor the Legislative Process

TAF completed a one-year partnership with the Nepal Constitution Foundation (NCF) to convene a coalition of five interest groups (Dalit, Madheshi, women, youth and Janajati) to conduct legislative audits. Most of the representatives in this coalition also have a legal background, which helps to study the bills’ compliance with international norms and standards, legal and statutory coherence, and other technical details of the bills. This quarter NCF audited the following acts: Public Procurement Act Amendment Bill; Bagmati Civilization Development Council Act; Contempt of Court Act; Nepalganj University Bill; Amending the Voters List Act; Jail/Bail provisions of Proposed Criminal Procedure Code; Bill to Amend Scholarship Act; and Social Security Fund Bill. The analysis and recommendations from the audits are distributed to relevant parliamentarians and are available on NCF’s website (<http://www.ncf.org.np/?page=activities&id=2>). They are also printed in three print magazines, *Nepal* and *Shichhyak* in Nepali and *New Spotlight* in English. Below are excerpts of the feedback from the social audits.



Review on Bill to Amend the Voter List Act 2063 & Review on Contempt of Court Act 2067

Amendment of Voters List Act, 2063

The Voters List Act, 2063 was enacted to amend and consolidate the existing laws regarding the voters lists. The amendment to that Act has been proposed to computerize the system for storing voters’ photos and fingerprints, and to avoid the number of mistakes

seen in the previous voters lists. This reform is estimated to cost approximately Nepali Rs. 3.6 billion, but it will greatly improve the existing system.

Improvements that can be made to this Act include, for example, Section 11, which empowers the registration official to ask for any identification documents, such as a citizenship certificate or landowner's certificate. Citizenship certificates are the most reliable basis of inducting a name into the voters list. The Act can be amended to place more emphasis upon the requirement of citizenship certificate for inducting a name into the voters list. Chapter 3, regarding special provisions to temporary voters, was included to enable the Maoist combatants residing in the cantonments to vote. This needs to be amended to include only the election officials and security personnel. The Election Commission must also encourage voting from women, whose participation was been historically very low. Participation of women is essential considering they constitute over half the population of the country.

Contempt of Court Act, 2067

The Contempt of Court Act, 2067 is the first of its kind in Nepal. Traditionally, the law on contempt has been based on precedents established by the Supreme Court. The government has never considered introducing any legislation in this regard, the way many other common law countries in the world have. This bill was drafted with the intention to make judicial process clean, unbiased and effective, to promote the faith of the people in the judiciary, and to control acts undermining the prestige of the judiciary.

While the attempt to legislate a separate act on contempt of court must be taken in a positive manner, there is room for improvement in the current form of the Act to be both judicial and effective. For example, the definition of contempt in Section 4 is unable to clarify the various types of contemptuous acts that are recognized in the broader legal system. With regard to the mode, contempt can be divided into two categories: direct contempt, which occurs inside the court, and indirect contempt, which occurs outside the court and consists of bribing advocates or witnesses, or publishing defamatory material. This bill does not make a clear distinction between direct or indirect contempt. It would be better to divide such offences in different sections and prescribe separate punishments. Presently the bill puts too much discretion upon the judges regarding punishment by not distinguishing between the punishment suited to the nature of the offence and by only prescribing the maximum punishment.

After the completion and review of the first year of programming, TAF and NCF have decided to also audit bills still at the ministries that have sufficiently matured (i.e., the bill is in the final consultation phase before being submitted to the parliament) to ensure that there are sufficient bills to be audited in the following year. This provides more windows of opportunity for the stakeholders involved to audit and provide meaningful recommendations in the legislative process. Following the social audit, TAF will continue to coordinate with *New Spotlight* to disseminate findings and recommendations of the social audits through print media.

Conducting Nationwide Townhall Consultations with Youth and Women on Transitional Legislation

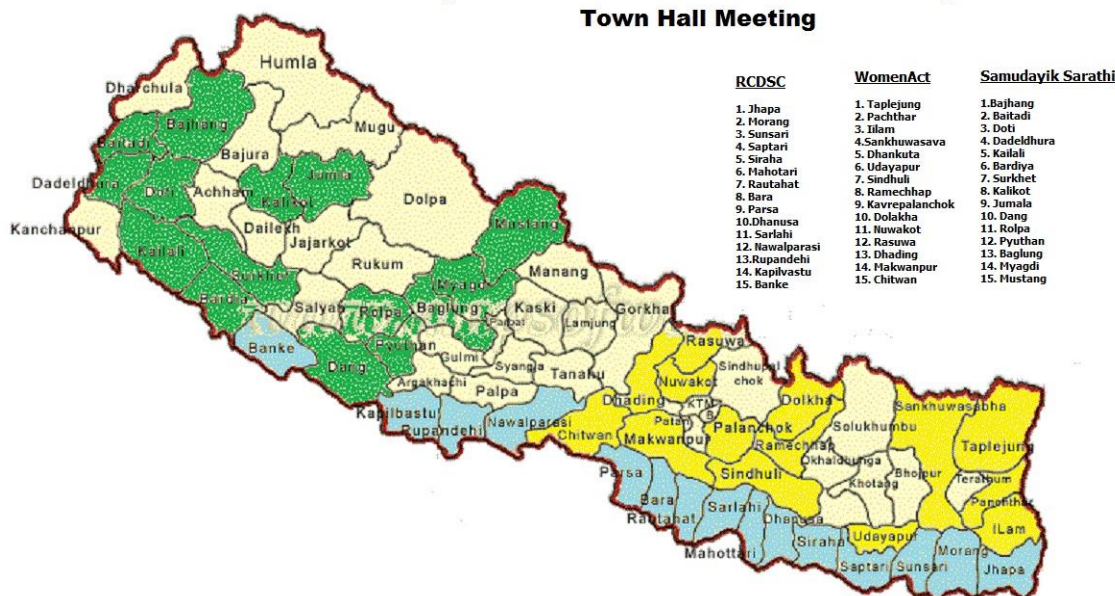
This quarter, TAF worked with its partners – Samudayak Sarathi (SS), Rural Community Development Service Council (RCDS) and WomenAct (WA) – to conduct the fifth round of townhall meetings. The discussions focused on the amendments to the existing Civil Code that were presented in parliament as the Civil Code Draft Bill 2068 BS. Honorable Shobakar Parajuli attended one of the townhall meetings organized by RCDS in Birgunj.

Overall, 2,218 participants attended 45 townhall meetings. The gender composition and ethnic demographics of the participants are presented below.

Demographic and Ethnic Profile of Participants

Total	Gender		Age Group		Upper Caste		Adibasi/Janajati		Dalits		Unidentified	Muslims
	Female	Male	16-39	40-A	Hill/ Mountain	Terai/ Madesh	Hill/ Mountain	Terai/ Madesh	Hill/ Mountain	Terai/ Madesh		
2218	1166	1052	1921	297	890	104	441	400	234	69	7	73
					994		841		303			

Coverage of the Youth and Women Focused Lagislative Town Hall Meeting



Some of the major recommendations raised at the townhall meetings are presented below.

Feedback on Clauses

Clause 67	Marriage should not be taken merely for the purpose of reproduction. This article provisions marriage as between male and female; marriage of third gender, homosexual, gay, lesbian, etc. should also be legalized.
Clause 70	Minimum age to get married for both male and female should be 20 years. Those marriages

	under the age of 20 should be void from the beginning.
Clause 72	Before the legal separation of former wife or husband, second marriage should be void and be punished.
Clause 82(ga)	The provision " <i>if the wife remarries without getting divorce from the first marriage</i> " should be deleted.
Clause 83 (gha)	The provision " <i>if a husband and wife separate after dividing their property as per the law</i> " should be deleted as this has the potential of misinterpretation and misuse.
Clause 94&95	The provision " <i>if wife or husband is alcoholic or smokes</i> " should be added.
Clause 95(gha)	The provision " <i>if the husband remarries</i> " should be deleted.
Clause 101	This provision should be equally implemented to both husband and wife.
Clause 103&216	If the wife remarries, the property she inherited from her first husband must be obligated to the children from the first marriage. She must not be obligated to return the inherited properties to her first husband.
Clause 242	Equal right should be given to Notary Public to verify will-papers.
Clause 252(ka)& (ga)	The provision " <i>dependent parents</i> " should be added and " <i>instead of 21 years old, 18 years old son and daughter</i> " would be appropriate.
Clause 267	When and where local body assumes ownership of a property from an individual under the inheritance law, the use of such property should be named under the specific individual.



Snapshot of townhall meeting

C. Meetings/Consultations/Events

Observing TAF's Bill Review Event

On January 3, NDI observed a bill review program organized by the Nepal Constitution Foundation (NCF), a TAF sub-grantee, to review the "Bill on Amendment of Public Procurement Act." The bill relates to corruption and transparency issues vis-à-vis public procurement. Bhava Nath Dahal, a chartered accountant with a legal background, presented a research paper at the forum. Several relevant suggestions emerged during the event.

Meeting with the State Minister of Finance and the Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation

On January 11, NDI and Pro Public Executive Director Prakash Mani Sharma met with State Minister of Finance Hon. Hari Raj Limbu on behalf of the members of parliament (MPs) of the district of Kanchanpur to request additional funds to address the issue of flooding in the district. NDI and Pro Public also organized a meeting with Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation Hon. Lokendra Bist Magar to request his presence at a meeting with parliamentarians from Kapilbastu, Dailekh, Surkhet and Siraha districts.

Women CA Members Book Launching

On January 31, NDI attended a women CA members' book launching event jointly organized by the CA Women Caucus, CA Secretariat, Nepal Law Society and International IDEA. The event was attended by Rt. Honorable Chair/Speaker Subas Chandra Nembang and Hon. Vice Chair/Deputy Speaker Purna Kumari Subedi. The book, *Women Members of the Constituent Assembly*, contains information on the contributions of 197 women members in the constitution-making process in Nepal. It documents stories of women CA members and their political struggles, hopes and dedication to bringing equality to Nepali society.

Meeting with the Acting Secretary of the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation

On February 3, NDI and Pro Public held a meeting with the acting secretary of the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation at the office of the Minister of State for Land Reforms. The acting secretary gave a presentation on issues related to deforestation and the government's efforts in conserving forest areas. State Minister Hon. Jwala Kumari Sah also participated in the meeting.

USAID Video Conference

On February 23, Institute staff attended a live video conference at the U.S. Embassy organized for young Nepali parliamentarians on "*Election Campaigns and Messaging*." Two U.S. experts, Celinda Lake and Ann E. W. Stone, held presentations. The Institute assisted the State Department, through USAID, by suggesting names of experts and potential parliamentarians as attendees and communicating with several of them to confirm their participation. Eight of the 21 parliamentarians attending the conference were from NGPG.

IVLP Nomination

During this reporting period, the Institute submitted names of three nominees to USAID-Nepal for the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) in fiscal year 2013. The IVLP is designed to broaden the professional perspective of up-and-coming Nepali leaders with extraordinary potential by providing them an early, first-hand experience of the U.S. through exposure to U.S. values, government, and civil society. NDI's three nominees, Hon. Kiran Yadav (NC), Hon. Pramod Prasad Gupta (MJFN-D) and Hon. Rabindra Prasad Adhikari (CPN-UML), were selected on the basis of their professional merit as well as their potential to represent Nepal.

IV. RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Objective 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.

- Six master trainers from the NC who participated in NDI's national ToT for political parties in early 2011 have been named to the party's "Central Policy and Orientation Academy." With support from experts working in different fields, the NC Academy will prepare an annual training program and provide comprehensive training on party ideology, policy, principles and programs.

- Following NDI's national ToT, the NC, SP and CPN-ML have conducted district trainings for their party cadres, replicating one or more of the Institute's training modules.
- Following the national workshop on voter registration by political parties in Kathmandu in January 18-19, 2012, eight political parties organized replicate programs in the districts of Dhankuta, Morang, Jhapa, Dhanusha, Saptari, Dang and Rolpa. Two hundred and seventy district-level party activists received training on the importance of voter registration.
- Party activists at both the district and national levels acknowledged the importance of voter registration for their respective parties. As a testimony to this, the TMLP president traveled from Kathmandu to Dhanusha to support and encourage his party activists to organize door-to-door campaigns and locate unregistered voters.
- In all districts, DEOs presented information on voter registration to party activists. By facilitating such programs at the district level, NDI contributed to the Election Commission of Nepal and political parties' goal of having each supporter and member registered.
- The total number of unique visitors on Freedom Forum's NepalElectionChannel.org website has increased over the last quarter on both the English and Nepali versions. The number of Facebook posts and likes and Twitter followers and tweets also increased compared to the previous quarter. These social media tools have been useful in attracting new users of the site. Moreover, the participation of people with comments and input to the regular media updates helped create debate on electoral issues, political development and violation of press freedom through public participation. The web edition of the Nepal Samacharpatra daily recently carried out interview of former Chief Election Commissioner, Bhojraj Pokhrel exclusively published on the site.
- FNJ now has a digitized database of over 2,500 active journalists across the country in an easily retrievable format.

Objective 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions.

- The second round of community dialogues in ten districts created an effective forum for elected representatives and constituents to interact with each other. The dialogues have enhanced the representative roles of parliamentarians by providing them a platform to gather constituent input and feedback.
- These dialogues also provided constituents the opportunity to hold their elected officials accountable, with constituents asking various questions and commenting on the progress made by parliamentarians on targets set during the first round of community dialogues in 2011.
- Following the second round of community dialogues in Siraha and as a result of the active support and participation of the parliamentarians, the District Development Committee (DDC) of Siraha decided to organize the Salahesh Festival for tourism promotion on April 13, 2012. A sixty-one member Event Celebration Committee has been constituted to ensure the festival is a success. This was one of the major targets set by parliamentarians and

constituents during the first round of community dialogue. Similarly, the DDC of Surkhet has allocated 100,000 Nepali rupees for the preparation of a Master Plan for Tourism Infrastructure Development.

V. EVALUATION

This quarter, the Institute concluded Phase I of the political party ToT. NDI trained 265 party activists to become master trainers for their respective party training units. The completion of Phase I of the training component, consisting of a national ToT in Kathmandu, followed by four regional trainings, marks a milestone in the Institute's political party development work. Political parties have demonstrated their willingness to strengthen their capacity by sending qualified participants. However, parties have struggled to meet the Institute's request for increasing women's participation, as only 30 percent of the master trainers were women.

An effective way to gauge the commitment of political parties to share ownership of the ToT component is the replicate trainings conducted by parties in the districts. While some parties have already begun to utilize their trainers and topics, other parties are moving more slowly. The Institute will have more information to share in the next quarter as more parties establish training units and begin using their training resources.

Similarly, the IPA continues to be a very useful tool for communication between the Institute and political parties. IPA members represent senior positions in their respective parties and most are also heads or members of their party training units. In light of this, the Institute, after the completion of each activity related to the ToT component, seeks feedback from these members. The Institute also plans to utilize the expertise of IPA to collect information on replicate programs conducted by political parties.

This quarter, the Institute completed the second round of community dialogues in ten districts. While all parliamentarians representing the ten districts participated in these dialogues, they exhibited a wide range of skill levels and initiative. Some parliamentarians have demonstrated exceptional skills in coordinating with their respective monitoring committees and following up with relevant government agencies to address district specific issues. Of note is the fact that most of these parliamentarians have been backbenchers or previously considered low profile. The dialogues have not only provided an effective platform for these parliamentarians to raise their profile in the districts but also for constituents to recognize political officials they do not often see, helping to develop emerging leaders for the country.

The voter registration program also effectively demonstrated political parties' willingness to replicate trainings at the district level. The Institute continues to collaborate with stakeholders both at the national and local level. As a testimony to this fact, the Election Commission of Nepal participated in the national voter registration program held in Kathmandu, while in the districts, the participation of the DEOs added substance to the political parties' voter registration drive. A proof of the ongoing success of this program will be when political parties conduct door-to-door canvassing, implement the action plans they have developed, and take concrete steps to get voters registered.

Although AFN and its project partners were in agreement over the format of “Loktantra Mantra,” it has taken more time than anticipated to produce the radio program. The content required depends on reporters who were trained six months before the production began. AFN has been working with reporters and mentoring them until quality reports are produced or an interview conducted. AFN expects the radio program will gain momentum in the next quarter.

TAF/CEPPS has been successful in creating an environment that ensures a cross-cutting relationship between program partners as evidenced by the sharing of program information, research findings and resource persons. For example, the relationship initiated with the Parliament Secretariat spokesperson through TAF's work in establishing the media center has now turned into a regular spot (*“From the Spokesperson's Desk”*) in the weekly radio show *Hamro Kanoon*. Depending on the amount of information available to the spokesperson, this spot varies from 30 seconds to three minutes in length.

TAF had originally planned to review bills during the townhall discussions and social audits that have been tabled in the parliament, when bills are returned to the legislative committee for final discussion before the voting begins. During the first year of program, the selection of bills relevant to the public was limited. However, as the government and the legislative parliament have moved slowly in the past year, there are fewer bills that are appropriate for these two activities. In the future, given the political uncertainty, it may be challenging to move forward on this program activity. To remedy this, TAF and its implementing partners have decided to broaden the program from bills that have been tabled in parliament to bills developed by the government that have “matured” and are close to the level of being submitted to parliament. TAF plans to work closely with its legal consultants to ensure the maturity of the bills.

At the beginning of last quarter, TAF and its legal consultants and implementing partners selected the amendment to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) bill for the townhall discussions. Preparation was in full swing, including research of the legislative process and the training of moderators for discussion. However, a few days before the start of the discussions, the NHRC bill was passed by the parliament. The unpredictability of the legislative process is a challenge. For example, the Electricity Act that was discussed in prior townhall meetings had been in the parliament for over two years with over 140 amendments. For an activity that takes significant amount of time to undertake, coupled with the time-sensitive nature of the legislative process, understanding the timing of the bills is crucial in making the intended impact. TAF continues to consult with its partners to ensure intervention within the window of opportunity available.

Most of the participants of the townhall meetings, despite being from urban and peri-urban areas, have little understanding of the legislative process. Many are unaware of the process through which bills originate, percolate through the legislative system, and eventually become a legally binding document. Through these townhall meetings, where each legislative bill is thoroughly discussed, including presentation of the background and international experiences, the participating women and youth get to participate directly and have some voice in the legislative process.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

During the next quarter, the CEPPS/Nepal partners will conduct the activities indicated below.

- NDI will conduct its Future Leadership Academy, consisting of two national five-day trainings.
- IPWA will expand its district committee in one additional district and conduct capacity building training for the newly elected women members.
- NDI will organize two multiparty workshops with political parties.
- The Institute and international expert Dr. Sherrie Wolff will facilitate a two-day multiparty workshop with major political parties in Kathmandu. In addition, Dr. Wolff will hold consultations with targeted parliamentary committees to organize committee specific workshops, seminars, and training sessions.
- NDI will continue community dialogue follow-up activities and meetings in nine districts (Dhankuta, Siraha, Bara, Nuwakot, Syangja, Kapilvastu, Doti, Surkhet and Dailekh) and will expand the dialogue program to an additional four districts.
- NDI will conduct at least one seminar and a capacity building event for NGPG members.
- NDI will organize at least one activity to facilitate dialogue on critical topics between parliamentarians and constituents in Lalitpur, Dhanusha and Arghakhanchi.
- NDI, in coordination with the Parliamentary Secretariat, will select, recruit and deploy interns as part of the parliamentary internship program.
- AFN will produce the remaining 19 episodes of the radio program and broadcast them on 80 radio stations. As a part of monitoring and evaluation, AFN will monitor the broadcast and impact of the program in the communities it reaches.
- Internews will continue working with investigative journalism trainer Mohan Mainali and a local developer to develop an online Investigative Journalism toolkit.
- FNJ will survey 2,000 journalists on their use of social media and will report on the findings.
- Freedom Forum will continue to manage the NepalElectionChannel.org site including monthly monitoring reports.
- Following the initial meeting with the secretary general and spokesperson of the Parliament Secretariat, TAF will work with Writing Workshop and the Parliament Secretariat to develop a workplan. TAF plans to complete the indexing of current volumes of materials that the library holds.
- TAF will continue to work with Writing Workshop to complete the Parliament Secretariat's media policy as well as provide initial trainings to Parliament Secretariat staff.

- TAF will continue to work with SS, WA and RCDSC in conducting the next round of townhall meetings in the coming quarter.
- TAF will continue to work closely with NCF and the interest groups in identifying and auditing relevant legislation in the coming quarter. Furthermore, TAF will coordinate with New Spotlight to ensure the dissemination of interest groups' audit findings and recommendations through the print media.
- TAF will continue to work closely with Interface Nepal to identify relevant legislation and will provide assistance in producing and broadcasting the weekly radio show.
- TAF will continue to work closely with all its component partners to ensure close coordination between the various activities.